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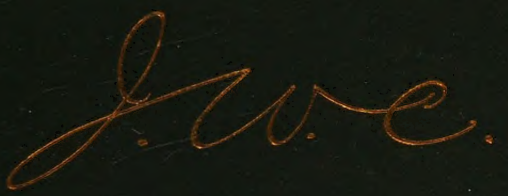

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J. W. Chadwick

OLD AND NEW

UNITARIAN BELIEF

BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

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From Faith to Faith

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Inscribed

TO

THE UNITARIAN FAMILY ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN, AND
ESPECIALLY TO THOSE MEN OF FORCE AND GENIUS WHO
HAVE BEEN MY TEACHERS FROM MY YOUTH UP, AND
TO THOSE FRIENDS OF MY SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN
WHO FOR THIRTY YEARS HAVE GIVEN ME
SO FREELY OF THEIR TRUST AND LOVE.

PREFACE.

THE chapters of this book, with the exception of the first and last, were written for my Brooklyn congregation as a series of monthly lecture sermons during the season extending from November, 1893, to May, 1894. The interest which they awakened and the satisfaction which they gave have seemed to justify their publication, and I have thought that a book containing them might mark appropriately the conclusion of my thirtieth year with a people whose generous loyalty to me has been more beautiful than words can say. While none of the chapters is as good as I could wish, some of them, I know, are not so good as others, because of slacker health and spirits and more serious interruptions than the common run. But I have gone over them all with care, and tried to better what I could not radically change. In matters of pure fact I have sought to follow the most excellent authorities, verifying every particular of which I had any doubt, and yet, it may be, trusting too much a memory

that has generally served me well enough to deserve a generous confidence. It was unavoidable, from the nature of the subject, that the lines should often cross each other, and that there should be some repetition. But this defect has its advantages in the better recollection of my matter to which it may contribute in my readers' minds. One does not learn by once reading anything, but by many repetitions; and I have written for learners, not for those already well informed. Herein is my excuse for the further repetitions of my first chapter and my last. They are voluntary and deliberate, with a view to making a more definite impression. I must beg my readers not to be discouraged in the porch of each chapter from the second to the eighth, but to go on, hoping to find a better welcome farther in; for in each case I have written the concluding part, dealing with recent times, with much more heart and hope than the preceding. I dare not hope that my treatment of opinions more or less different from my own will in all cases be accepted by those holding such opinions as entirely fair; but I have meant to write "with malice towards none, with charity for all." It may be that

some of my Unitarian brethren will demur at my conception of Unitarian progress and my measure of its rate. In such estimates we are all of us more or less liable to what Emerson called "the subjective twinkle"; but I have never consciously allowed my wish to be the father of my thought. If there is one thing which I hope my book will do over and above all others, it is that it may furnish some correction of a very general impression in the Unitarian mind that Unitarianism is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." We make much of the changes which other creeds have undergone, and sometimes think and speak as if we had ourselves been mainly influential in bringing these changes about. Something we have done, no doubt; but in the mean time the same Time Spirit which has been at work on the other creeds has been at work upon ours also, and the changes it has undergone have not been less than theirs. But so much more unifying, in the long run, is intellectual liberty than dogma, prescription, and authority, that it may well be doubted whether any Protestant sect is so well agreed at present on the main lines of its belief and faith as "the unsectarian sect called Unitarians."

The first chapter was originally prepared as a lecture in a course on the different Churches of Christendom. It has been printed separately and in a book by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; but, as printed here, it has been considerably changed. The concluding chapter was prepared as an address before the Middle States Conference, and was read at Meadville, Pa., June 12, 1894, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the Meadville Theological School. Its tone would have been less critical, and more joyous and encouraging, if I could then have foreseen how we should be caught up at our Saratoga Conference into a sweet heaven of agreement as to the things commonly believed among us, and a common spirit of inclusive liberality.

If the scope and purpose of the book, considered as a whole, were those of Dr. J. H. Allen's 'Unitarian Movement since the Reformation' recently published, it would be absurd for me to put it forth. But they are very different; and I am glad that I can refer my readers to a book so rich and full and interesting in its presentation of the story of our historical development. I was much indebted to his

earlier works in the preparation of my lectures, and to his latest in their last revision. I must also express my indebtedness to Dr. Alexander Gordon for four admirable articles on Servetus and the Socini in the *Theological Review*, and add that they should be made more accessible than they are in the pages of an extinct periodical. What shall I say more, but, after the manner of many writers, in the words of the Maccabean annalist, "If I have done well and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto"?

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I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

Unitarianism, as a doctrine of the unity of God, is much older than the Christian Church, not only in the direct line of development from Judaism, but on various subsidiary lines. This is true of the explicit doctrine, and it is much more widely true of that implied in many forms of primitive religion. The heroic company of scholars which has argued for a primitive Monotheism, from which the various polytheisms of the world were a decadence, has not been wholly given over to believe a lie. Their crude result has been the clumsy symbol of a striving after unity, or tendency to it, in the most primitive and polytheistic forms of worship and belief. Thanks to this tendency or striving, the Vedic Hymns elevate Indra or Varuna into a prominence that sometimes leaves the other deities of the pantheon with their occupations gone. Behind the dualistic strife of Ahrimanes and Ahura-Mazda a power is conceived that reconciles their opposition, and in the Greek mythology we have an ultimate fate to which the Olympian gods must yield. Underlying and overtopping all the different theological schemes, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, there was the sense of the Divine, of that mysterious power

which was at the heart of things, coming to clearer consciousness in the thought of philosophic minds, but seldom wholly absent from the most simple and untaught.

That the early Christian Church was Unitarian in the sense of being Monotheistic is evident from the fact that the early Christians were mainly Jews; the earliest, Jews without exception. Whatever Jesus might have thought as to its being no robbery for him to be equal with God, to say nothing of identity, for him to have broached such an opinion would have brought his ministry to such a sudden termination that we should never have so much as heard his name. The fishermen of Galilee, equally with the scholars of Jerusalem, would have recoiled from such presumption with immeasurable distrust; and there would have been no need of any civil process to punish it: an outburst of spontaneous rage would have anticipated Pilate's acquiescence. The simple fact that the first theoretic conception of Jesus was that which regarded him as the Jewish Messiah makes the idea of his original deity absurd, for the idea of deity no more entered into the conception of the Messiah than the idea of comfort entered into the later doctrine of eternal hell.

The deification of Jesus was a very gradual process. To say that the beginnings can be found in the New Testament is not to claim for them a very primitive Christianity, for the New Testament books took just about a century to come full circle,—from 50 to 150 A.D. Paul's Epistles represent a more developed form of the doctrine of Christ's nature than

do the Synoptic Gospels; but this is only what we should expect from what we know of Paul and his relation to the early Church, and of the character of the Synoptics, as the last result of a long process of traditional aggregation. The highest point in either of the three is found in the idea of a dignity and office to be bestowed on Jesus as a reward of his faithfulness, and through the medium of his death and resurrection. That all the Epistles of Paul were written before the first of the Synoptics shows, when we consider how little the Epistles colored them, how tenaciously the human side of Jesus held its ground. As the deification proceeded, the Jews were alienated more and more. In the Epistles of Paul the process of exaltation is much further advanced than in the Synoptics; but it stops short of actual deification, as does the Fourth Gospel also, though that goes a little beyond Paul. The nature of Christ was a matter of free speculation for the next two hundred years, and even further on. Midway of the third century Sabellius advocated the doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all emanations of the Logos, which he identified with the Supreme God. For a time this quaternity, this fourfold mystery of the divine nature, threatened to be the orthodox doctrine; but it was finally condemned as heretical, and in its place the doctrine of the Nicene Creed was set up,— namely, that Christ was of the same substance with the Father, and was the product of his eternal generation. The great advocate of this doctrine at Nicæa, in 325 A.D., was Athanasius; and its great opponent was Arius.

Time was when the majority of Unitarians cast in their lot with Arius, and those who were inclined to question his superiority to Athanasius were received with much suspicion and alarm. But the preference is now quite the other way, not as fully accepting the thought of Athanasius, but as thinking that it had probably more philosophic truth in it than the Arian conception. This tendency has been interpreted by some orthodox critics, whose wish is father of their thought, as a retreat upon the orthodox position. But, in truth, the late attraction of Athanasius for Unitarians has been his teaching of the humanity of Jesus. If he affirmed his deity, he affirmed his humanity with equal energy; while Arius makes him a being *sui generis*,— not a non-natural man, but a non-natural God; not quite so old as God, but so nearly that that Arius would not say "there was a time when he was not," but "there was when he was not." It is interesting and significant that Dr. Hedge, sympathizing with the Athanasian doctrine rather than with that of Arius, would have had the Unitarians call themselves Humanitarians. The animating motive of both Arius and Athanasius was much the same,— to steer clear of Ditheism,— the affirmation of two gods,— while still exalting Jesus to the highest possible degree. But, dreading one and the same evil, the two parties took different methods of avoiding it, and in their hot insistence, each on its own way, made every corner of the Roman Empire ring with angry altercation.

When this at length had died away, there was

very little Unitarianism, as opposed to Trinitarianism, for some dozen centuries, though there was here and there a good deal of earnest criticism of the creed of our traditional orthodoxy, some of whose doctrines were slowly getting themselves established all along this weary time. The doctrine of the Atonement had to wait till the eleventh century for anything approximating to its modern form.

Considered doctrinally, the Reformation was a reactionary movement; and its reaction was to those opinions and beliefs which were most horrible in the earlier centuries, which had most oppressed the mind and heart of Catholic Christendom, and which had been shorn of something of their hatefulness. As for the doctrine of the Trinity, Luther accepted it by sheer force of will; Melanchthon would not consider it too seriously; Zwingli was sounder (less tritheistic) upon this point than Calvin himself, while he differed from him by the heavens' width in regard to total depravity, finding in every child a new-born Adam, thanks to the power of Jesus' death and resurrection, and matched the Free Religionists of our own time in his abundant sympathy with the religions of the heathen world. Castellio, one of the finest spirits of his age, at first befriended by Calvin, afterwards became the victim of his implacable enmity for his free handling of predestination, and was so beset that in his lonely banishment he was literally starved to death. The name of Servetus is much better known. With all his brilliant qualities, he was somewhat crotchety, or, in more precise language, "one of those bold spirits who sometimes

seize hold at once, and, as by instinct, of high and rich truths, but are wanting in the depth and sobriety of reasoning power necessary for the working out of a great system." His system has been described by M. Réville, a competent critic, as a crude mixture of rationalism, pantheism, materialism, and theosophy. Generally hailed by Unitarians as "one of themselves," if he had been, the shame of Calvin would have been less in putting him to death. In truth, he would have had him beheaded, and not burned; but, as he had done his best to hand him over to the Roman Inquisition, which would have tortured him first and burned him afterwards, he should not be too much admired on this account. So far as a matter somewhat obscure and difficult can be made out, Servetus held an opinion which was much the same as that of Sabellius. A man is never sure of orthodoxy who does a little thinking for himself. This was Bishop Huntington's trouble when he left the Unitarians: before he knew it, he had a quaternity upon his hands, as Dr. Hedge made clear enough. One thing is certain,—that Servetus was no Arian. He said distinctly that Arius was "not equal to the glory of Christ,"—"*gloriæ Christi incapacimus*." And as little Arian were the Socini, Lælius and Faustus, uncle and nephew, whose name has nicknamed English Unitarians to the present time, though long since it ceased to indicate their opinions as obviously as the name Calvinism has ceased to indicate the opinions of the modern orthodox. But I do not know of any name upon their calendar of which Unitarians

have more reason to be proud, not even Channing's, than the name Socinus, such a leap the uncle and nephew of this name made out of the darkness of the ancient and the mediæval into the light and beauty of the modern world. It was no petty or equivocal arraignment that the younger brought against the orthodox creed: it was a sweeping one, without paltering or obscurantism; and the scope of it included the doctrines of the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the personality of the devil, total depravity, vicarious atonement, and eternal hell. Moreover, he had the social temper of Priestley and Channing, their hatred of oppression, their sacred passion for a kingdom of heaven upon earth.

Poland and Transylvania had been troubled with dissentients from the doctrine of the Trinity before the burning of Servetus in 1553; and in 1558 Georgio Blandrata went to Poland, and heaped such fuel on the fire that in a little while there was a general conflagration and a schism in the Church, the year 1565 seeing the establishment of the first Unitarian church that Christendom had seen since Constantine, throwing his sword into the Athanasian scale, had made the other kick the beam. The history of Polish Unitarianism is a history of an efficient organization, and a success so positive that it drew upon itself the arm of persecution with its utmost strength, a decree of expulsion (1658) marking the first centennial of Blandrata's arrival in Poland. The exiles went in all directions, those that went to Transylvania finding there a goodly fellowship which had sprung into being almost simultaneously

with the beginnings of the Polish Church. To-day it nourishes a vigorous life, with more than a hundred congregations, and cherishes the name of Francis David as did the Polish Church that of Faustus Socinus above all names in its eventful history. It was Socinus who took up the work of Blandrata in Poland, and carried it along to larger issues; while Blandrata went to Transylvania, first to establish the new faith, and afterwards to desert it in its day of trial, even allowing himself to be made the instrument of David's imprisonment, which soon resulted in his death.

By this time (1579) certain Anabaptists had already borne their fagots to St. Paul's Cross, in London, and been burned there for the wrongfulness of their opinions and the glory of God; and among their opinions thus cruelly opposed were some strikingly Unitarian. For like opinions Joan Boucher perished at the stake in 1550; and because "the new man always hates the newest, and the seceder from the seceder is as damnable as the pope himself," we have in the same reign (Tudor Mary's), from one John Philpot, Archdeacon of Winchester, an apology "written for Spittynge on an Arian, with an invective against the Arians, the veri naturall children of Antichrist." "Apology" must here be understood as justification. The ecclesiastical spitter and the Arian were both in the same prison for heresy. It was a very characteristic piece of business. The progressive orthodox of our own time are much given to spitting, in a figurative but not agreeable manner, upon those who are so unfortu-

nate, or fortunate, as to be a little more progressive than themselves. That good Queen Bess might not be any whit behind her father and her sister in her disrespect for Arians, she burned one in 1583 and another in 1585; and in 1612 two others — Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman — had the distinction of being the last two persons burned for heresy on English soil.

As yet, apparently, the Socinian influence had not been felt in England; but signs of it began soon after to appear. The Socinian books came in; and the Presbyterian Synods, which midway of the seventeenth century constituted the established Church, forbade their sale and importation. The exclusion was imperfect, and many persons were infected with the dreadful taint. One of these was John Biddle (spelled Bidle at the time), who made a bad beginning at Oxford, in that, as we are told, he was "more determined by reason than by authority." Frankly anti-trinitarian, in 1654 all his books, and they were many, were ordered to be burned by the common hangman; and but for the interposition of Cromwell he might have shared their fate. As it was, when Cromwell had concluded his great work, the doughty man had no defender, and was thrown into a loathsome prison, which soon ended his career. In 1655, the year following that in which Biddle's incendiary books were subjected to a homœopathic treatment, Dr. Owen, the rigidest as Baxter was the most liberal of dissenters, said there was "not a city, a town, and scarce a village in England where some of this poison was not poured forth." Among those who

took kindly to this poison were John Milton, John Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, and Dr. Samuel Clarke easily first among the leading intellects of their time, though their Unitarianism was more of the Arian than the Socinian type. They were no more Trinitarians than Dr. Lyman Abbott, and believed in the deity of Christ no more than he; but they believed much less in his humanity. Another sturdy Unitarian was William Penn, who stated his objections to the doctrine of the Trinity very forcibly in a tract entitled 'The Sandy Foundation Shaken.'

With the downfall of the Stuarts in 1688 the "era of toleration" succeeded to the era of persecution and disability. Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians built their chapels east and west. But, while the Baptists and the Independents seemed to have learned no lesson of religious breadth and toleration in the school of narrowness and persecution to which they had been sent so long, it was different with the Presbyterians. Their chapels generally were established upon what are known as "open trusts." That is, they were not tied down to any creed or articles. Left free to read the Bible at first hand, they very soon began to wander from the strictness of the Westminster Confession. One hundred and seventy years ago they had got along as far as the Professor Briggs contingent of American Presbyterians have got now (1894). They had had enough of predestination, whether as election or reprobation; and the doctrine of the Trinity fell into general neglect. The state of things was very simi-

lar to that in America at the beginning of this century, when hundreds of Congregationalists and many of their ministers had ceased to care for or to preach the traditional dogmas, yet had not broken with them openly, but with this difference: while in America the signal for a manlier attitude came from without, as we shall see, in England it came from one of the progressive Presbyterians, Joseph Priestley, the first great English Unitarian, a scholar, a scientist, a discoverer, a reformer, of whom English Unitarians have as good reason to be proud as American Unitarians of Channing; though Priestley was a man of as much less exalted spiritual genius than Channing as he was a man of more restless scientific curiosity and intellectual range. His theological position was the direct result of his philosophy, which was the materialistic, associational, necessarian philosophy of Hartley. His belief in supernatural revelation was intense. He had an absolute distrust of reason as qualified to furnish an adequate knowledge of religious things, and at the same time a perfect confidence in reason as qualified to prove this negative and to determine the contents of the revelation. The doctrines of traditional orthodoxy he exhibited as "Corruptions of Christianity," not finding them in the New Testament. He made nothing of the natural argument for immortality, basing his hope entirely on the resurrection of Jesus, and arguing with perfect logical consistency that the general bodily resurrection of the dead will be as miraculous in every case as the resurrection of Jesus. The Unitarianism of Priestley was, in

fact, largely a reaction against the natural theology of the eighteenth-century Deists. It was less rational and progressive than that. And it tended much more to the dogmatic hardness of a creed than the Presbyterianism of "the Bible only" from which it was evolved. It made religion as much a matter of belief as it has ever been made. The hand of Priestley has been heavy upon English Unitarianism. But nothing shows more clearly and impressively what libels labels may become, and how wide the range of thought included in the Unitarian name, than a comparison of Priestley's Unitarianism with that of recent date. And nowhere else does this inclusion come out so strikingly as in a comparison of his thought with that of James Martineau, at whose birth in 1805 Priestley's death was so recent as the previous year. Martineau himself began with the materialistic philosophy and necessarian ethics of Priestley, but for forty years they have had no sterner opposition than from him. And, while Priestley contended that belief in the Messiahship of Jesus was the only essential of the Christian religion, Martineau contends that Jesus neither was the Messiah nor conceived himself to be so, that the doctrine of his Messiahship was one of the "Corruptions of Christianity" which Priestley omitted from his catalogue.

Three other names stand out with Priestley's as pre-eminent among the Unitarian founders of the eighteenth century. They are Price and Belsham and Lindsey. Price was not a Socinian, like Priestley and Belsham, in his theology, but an Arian; yet

he was in thorough sympathy with Priestley's political ideas. He was an intimate and valued friend of Benjamin Franklin, to whom he introduced Priestley at the beginning of that scientific career of which the discovery of oxygen was the proudest incident. He was equally the valued friend of American independence, and, with Priestley, of the French Revolution, in its earlier manifestations. His public advocacy of the Revolution drew upon him Burke's celebrated 'Reflections'; while Priestley's drew upon him the mob which sacked his house in Birmingham, and scattered his papers, and destroyed his philosophical instruments, where now his statue looks serenely down, as if he had forgotten or forgiven every wrong. But Unitarianism as a distinct organization in England derives neither from Price nor Priestley, nor from Belsham, who was a loud echo of Priestley's materialistic, necessarian Christianity, but from Theophilus Lindsey. He was the solitary contribution of the Established Church to the new faith. There were hundreds in that Church who agreed with him; and a number of them got together, and petitioned Parliament for some alteration of the creeds and articles that would enable them to use them without mental reservation. The petition was not even received. Whereupon all except Lindsey fell back upon their livings, fat or lean, resolved to wait for better times, meantime to go on using the words which they did not believe. So could not he. He gave up his Yorkshire vicarage, and went up to London with £20, the proceeds of his furniture and books; and in an auction-room in

Essex Street, just off the Strand, he started the first Unitarian Church. There, shortly after, was built the Essex Street Chapel, which still remains, the Unitarian headquarters of to-day; and, speaking there one morning in June, 1887, I felt myself to be on holy ground, not only because of the denominational association, but because Theophilus Lindsey was one of the holiest of men, one of the gentlest, purest, truest, that the world has ever known. Belsham was his successor, and thereby hangs a tale. Priestley, homeless in England, came to America in 1794, and was instrumental in the organization of a church in Philadelphia, which had lay-preaching till 1825, when Dr. Furness was installed its minister; and he is now, in 1894, its pastor emeritus, having brought his active ministry to an end in 1875. But this was not the first Unitarian Society in America. The first, like the first in England, and solitary as that in this respect, had an Episcopalian reformer for its minister, James Freeman, of King's Chapel, the grandfather, by marriage, of James Freeman Clarke. An English nobleman, travelling in this country,—Lord Stanley or Lord Amberley, I have forgotten which,—speaking of the King's Chapel Prayer Book, said to Dr. Bellows, "I understand it is our liturgy watered." "No," said Dr. Bellows, "washed." The washing, or watering, was done in 1785, by Dr., then young Mr. Freeman, who acknowledged his indebtedness to Theophilus Lindsey in his preface. In 1787 Mr. Freeman was installed by his vestrymen,—he had been a lay-reader before that,—no bishop being willing to lay his apostolic

hands upon a head so full of heresy. There were other Episcopal churches which the new wine made for a while somewhat unsteady in their gait, but they all settled down at length into a sober acquiescence. It was very different in the Congregational churches. These furnished the Unitarian body with nearly all its early churches in America, as the Presbyterians furnished them with nearly all their churches in England.

Ecclesiastically speaking, the Unitarian Church in America is "the liberal wing of the great Congregational body which founded the first colonies of New England and gave the law to Church and State for more than two hundred years." Twelve years ago 120 or more of our 366 Unitarian churches of that date were on an historical basis of Puritan Congregationalism. They had all descended from Puritan parishes; and thirty-eight of them antedated the year 1700, including the first church in Plymouth, that of the Pilgrim Fathers. For many years before the beginning of the present century Calvinism had been undergoing a process of softening and abridgment in the New England churches. Since the beginning of the century this process had become more general, and more conspicuous in its manifestations. It especially characterized some of the ablest ministers in and around Boston. A class was thus formed to which the name "Liberal Christians" was applied. The meaning of this term was simply that they were disposed to put a liberal construction on the Calvinistic creed. Among the members of this class there was no organized sympathy. They were generally

Arminians, but so predominantly intellectual rather than emotional, and so conservative in taste, that Arminian Methodism had for them no attractions. A smaller majority were dissenters from the Trinitarian dogma. In regard to the rank of Jesus and the nature of the atonement there was much less unanimity. Liberal Christian ministers exchanged pulpits freely with the so-called orthodox, and united with them in all the ecclesiastical relations of the time. Presently some of the more rigid of the orthodox party began to see that Liberal Christianity was silently but surely eating out the heart of Calvinism. The catastrophe would probably have come a few years sooner but for the War of 1812, which was of such absorbing interest that for the time the dangers to which Calvinism was subject were forgotten. But peace between America and England had hardly been proclaimed when war between Orthodoxy and Liberalism was declared. The declaration came from the orthodox side,—an article written in the *Panoplist* by Jeremiah Evarts, father of the Hon. William M. Evarts, written at the instance of Dr. Jedediah Morse, its editor, whose 'Geography' was a famous book in the forepart of the century. It was, perhaps, some sharp reviews of that, in which he fancied *odium theologicum* was present, that stirred him up to make reprisals in a book called 'American Unitarianism,' which was based on Belsham's Life of Lindsey. And now you have the tale which I said hung thereby, in speaking of Belsham's succession to Lindsey's place and work. Belsham's book was made up mainly of letters to

Lindsey by Dr. Freeman, Buckminster, and other Boston Liberals. Morse's book, and, still more vigorously and violently, Evarts's article, was bent on showing the sympathy and identity of the American Liberal Christians with the English Unitarians, and on convicting the former of dishonesty in covertly teaching or hypocritically concealing their opinions. Finally, the article was a call upon all orthodox Christians to come out from the Liberals, and deny to them the Christian name and Christian fellowship.

Dr. Channing, who in 1815 was thirty-five years old and had been for twelve years the beloved minister of the Federal Street Church in Boston, wrote an elaborate letter in answer to Morse's article, denying the general sympathy of his party with Priestley and Belsham (they were not Socinians, but Arians, for the most part, in their theory of Christ), but claiming for the Socinian humanitarians the Christian name, and all the rights and courtesies of Christian fellowship. But it was his reply to Evarts's charge of dishonesty and hypocrisy that showed what a reserve of moral indignation his quiet modesty had long concealed. His disclaimer was entirely rational, but the event proved the mistakenness of the policy which the Liberals had pursued. In periods of transition, negation and affirmation should go hand in hand. The policy of the Boston minister, who was "mighty careful to tell no lies," always fails in the long run. It is not enough to preach that which you believe, as Channing and his party did, with passionate sincerity. The negations must come out. They had to, then and there.

In conclusion, Channing pleaded earnestly against the exclusive spirit which would deny the Christian name, and shut out from Christian fellowship all those who could not take the Calvinistic shibboleth upon their lips. His pleading was in vain. The controversy which had been so vigorously begun went on for several years, and drew into it, on either side, men of great ability. Many things were said that showed how independent of each other are theological soundness and the Christian spirit. In the asperities of debate, in the injustice of parochial divisions, there was blame enough on either side. Scores of congregations were divided; and hundreds of the clergy and laity who should have been lifelong friends were ranged in hostile camps and met each other with indifferent greetings or averted eyes.

Channing's contribution to the controversy was equally remarkable for the smallness of its bulk and the weight of each particular item of the count. There was one mighty sermon in Baltimore (1819) at Jared Sparks's ordination; and not long ago I stood in the very church and pulpit in which it was preached, and felt myself again on holy ground. The pulpit's shape is not unlike that of a mortar, and the sermon that was shot from it exploded like a bomb in the orthodox camp. There was another mighty sermon that was preached at the dedication of the Second Unitarian Church in New York, in which the sacred eloquence of Dewey was afterward a soaring flame. There were a few articles in the *Christian Examiner* and a few public letters to the same effect. But every sermon that he preached

was interpenetrated with his Unitarian gospel of the dignity of human nature, the supremacy of reason, salvation by character, and the intellectual and moral unity of God and man. He had no liking for controversy, and the most of it fell into other hands, some of them mighty for the pulling down of strongholds of inveterate error, some of them plastic for the shaping of new forms of church organization and missionary work. Of the former, Andrews Norton, of the latter, Ezra Stiles Gannett, was easily the first. The elder Ware contended against Woods of Andover for the new interpretations: whence an imperfect pun — the "Wood'nd Ware Controversy" — touched with a gleam of humor the too sombre spirits of a strenuous and baleful time.

My friend, William C. Gannett, reckons that few of the preachers who were over forty at the outbreak were ever anything but Arians. The younger men were more inclined to the Socinian interpretation, which was not inconsistent with an intense Biblicism and supernaturalism. Jesus might be a man, and still invested with miraculous powers, miraculously born and raised up from the dead; and the Bible might be the infallible record of his life and teaching and of much besides. But hardly had the Unitarian controversy, as between Liberals and Calvinists, reached its term, which may be roughly fixed at 1830, than the first signs began to appear of a new controversy within the limits of the Unitarian body,— a controversy in which Channing was distinctly on the Liberal side, though others broke much more effectually than he with the Arian and

supernaturalist tradition. But we find him lamenting the development of "a Unitarian orthodoxy," and deprecating "a swollen way of talking about Christ," and these signs are two of many that make clear in what direction he was going, and why the more conservative people viewed him with distrust; though it should not be forgotten that his anti-slavery sympathies also were intolerable to many. But the Unitarianism of Channing, and those whose intellectual and spiritual temper was nearest akin to his, contained from the outset of the denominational history a principle — the principle of reason in religion — which soon or late was sure to carry those obedient to it a great deal farther away from Arianism, which exalted Christ sometimes to a degree of inappreciable difference from God, than the Socinian doctrine of a miraculously gifted man and an infallible book. It was inevitable, if reason was sufficient to determine the grounds and limits of a revelation, and within those limits to interpret what was written, that there should come the moment when it would dare to judge the revelation, and by such judgment assert its own superiority thereto. When Channing said, "The truth is, and it ought not to be denied, that our ultimate reliance is, and must be, on our own reason: I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is an expression of his will," he said that in which all our later developments were folded like the oak within the acorn's cup.

But the development would probably have been much slower if a new philosophy, quite different from that of Locke,— which was consciously the philos-

ophy of Channing, while unconsciously he anticipated a more spiritual rendering of the world,— and very different from that of Hartley,— which Priestley and Belsham had espoused,— had not sprung up in Germany, and been illustrated by such names as Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, and in England found such advocates as Coleridge and Carlyle. These last, it would appear, did much more than the Germans directly to foster the Transcendental movement in New England; and Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus,' with its one glorious chapter on "Natural Supernaturalism," the most of all. There were many touched with the new thought,— pre-eminently Emerson and Hedge, and Ripley and Clarke, and Bartol and Parker; and to the first and last of these respectively it fell to give to it its loftiest expression, and its most thorough-going application to the religious questions of the hour. Emerson's withdrawal from the Hanover Street pulpit in 1832, because of his inability to use the forms of the Lord's Supper as they were then generally understood, was followed in 1836 by his little book called 'Nature,' and in 1838 by his 'Divinity School Address,' higher than which the wings of his religious aspiration never beat the upper heavens. Furness's 'Remarks on the Four Gospels,' a book of startling radicalism in its day, came out in 1836; and Strauss's Life of Jesus, of the year before, had consequences not to be measured by the degree to which his mythical theory might commend itself to an intelligent and earnest mind. It laid bare the countless inconsistencies of the miraculous stories and the insufficiency of naturalistic ingenuity to meet the case.

But it was a young man — who was one of the first American readers of Strauss's book, and who reviewed it for the *Christian Examiner* with more satire than appreciation, who had just finished a translation, printed later, of De Wette's 'Introduction to the Old Testament' — who was to concentrate in himself to an unparalleled degree the influence of the New Criticism and New Philosophy on the Unitarian body. I speak of Theodore Parker, who was born Aug. 24, 1810, was settled at West Roxbury in 1837, and in Boston, where he had been preaching for some time, in 1846, and died in Italy, May 10, 1860. What manner of preaching he did in West Roxbury we have just now a better opportunity for knowing than formerly, a volume of his sermons there being still (1892) warm from the press. They are much warmer from the impress of his spirit. They have a wonderful simplicity. The love of God, the love of man, the love of all things beautiful and sweet and true, blossoms on every page. I had hoped that his sermon on 'The Temptations of Milkmen' would be there, but it is not.

Reading everything, three hundred and twenty volumes in fourteen months before he fairly got up steam, Parker read deep in all the philosophical and critical literature of the time, and skimmed from it the cream of cream. He heard Emerson in Cambridge, and walked home to Roxbury with a stormy pulse, thinking unutterable things. At least, so far he had not uttered them; but now he felt he must. And soon he did, first to his own people, and then one day — May 19, 1841 — in a South Boston ser-

mon at the ordination of a friend; and now the sermon ranks with Channing's Baltimore sermon and Emerson's at Cambridge as one of the great epoch-making sermons of the Unitarian development. Its subject was "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." The permanent was the spiritual truth of Jesus and his personality exalted to a degree which the most conservative Unitarian of the present time could not easily surpass. It was the transient part that was most permanent in the hearers' memories and the denominational consciousness. In this he included the New Testament miracles,— not as never having happened, but as being now more an encumbrance than a help. He also included the supernatural character of the Bible and Jesus, and the sacraments,— not as invalid and unworthy, but as not essential to a Christian faith and life. Parker had not yet thought out his system to the end; but he had gone too far already for the brethren's peace, or for his own. For, like some others, while he must speak frankly and strongly, he had a woman's heart, hated to wound others, and was easily wounded himself. The South Boston sermon was followed up with a course of lectures, afterwards published in a book called 'A Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion,' which are the best expression of Parker's theological position. No more religious book has ever welled from the deep heart of man. His new philosophy united with the fundamental religiousness of his nature to produce this result. His interpretation of the philosophy was much more positive than that of its great German ex-

pounders. Compared with Schelling's or Fichte's, it was as a mountain to a cloud; and, where Kant's "God and Immortality" were merely posited as conveniences for the working of his "Categorical Imperative" of the Moral Law, with Parker God, Immortality, the Moral Law, were intuitional certainties of irrefragable stability. It was as if he had set aside a public supernatural revelation only to substitute for it a private one in each several mind and heart. At the same time it must be said that in the general working of Parker's mind he was much more experiential than intuitional. His religious intuitionalism was very much the splendid symbol of his personal genius for religion and his own abiding faith. Channing, theoretically inductive, was practically deductive; while Parker, theoretically deductive, had such a stomach for facts as few men ever had, and his digestion of them gave the tone and vigor of his intellectual life.

The controversy growing out of Parker's theological position was both long and hard; and it was harder upon none than upon those who, honoring and loving him for his great gifts and noble spirit, felt that they could not walk with him because they were not agreed. He made no attempt to organize a party, and was left very much alone. To exchange with him was dangerous; and for daring so much on one occasion James Freeman Clarke saw the secession of a large section of his congregation, and John T. Sargent lost his standing as a minister at large. The influence of the controversy on the life of the denomination was simply paralyzing for

some twenty years. It alienated from its organized activities, if not from its name and its communion, many of the younger men, some of them, such as Johnson and Longfellow and Higginson and Weiss and Frothingham and Wasson, men of the rarest intellectual force and largest spiritual capacity, to lose whose furtherance and sympathy was almost a fatal blow. The bias of the anti-slavery conflict on the situation was such as to prevent an organized schism from the body. It was, moreover, of the essence of Transcendentalism to be distrustful of organization, and the anti-slavery movement drew off a world of Parker's energy that might have made the theological controversy still more hot; while the ethical passion of the young Abolitionists who followed the double lead of Parker and Garrison was for the time being the "one world at a time" which they could entertain, and furnished them with all the high and genial fellowship that they could ask.

The war of words came to an end at last on the political field, and the war of ships and armies followed; and in April, 1865, just as the tottering strength of the great rebellion was rushing down to final wreck, a Unitarian convention met in New York to initiate the fourth period of our denominational life, the period of organization. We will call the other three the periods of controversy, internal division, and stagnation — the last of these designations relative to the unrealized possibilities of the time. It was a good year for such a meeting, the three hundredth anniversary of the first Unitarian church established in the world, that of Georgio

Blandrata, in Poland. The convention was the direct result of Dr. Bellows's personal application to himself of that great word of the spirit,— "Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things." He had been faithful over the few things of the Sanitary Commission,— few relatively to the boundless energy of his organizing and inspiring genius. He had conceived and managed and inspired its glorious work; and all that he had done instead of exhausting his energy had stored up in him a fresh amount, which must have some new outlet, or the man would spiritually burst. In advance of the convention, in response to his appeal, $100,000 was raised by subscription, and turned over into the treasury of the Unitarian Association, four-fifths as much as had been given for denominational work through that channel during the preceding twenty-five years. A single year since then has seen $250,000 pouring through that channel; and the regular annual expenditure is about $100,000, which is very greatly increased by the work of the Western Conference, that of the State and the local conferences, and that of the Women's National Alliance, while special objects sometimes double the amount. From those whose wish is father to the thought we sometimes hear that Unitarianism is dying out; but in the light of these figures, and with half a million of our publications scattered every year where it was a few thousands formerly, and with more churches west of the Rockies than we had west of the Hudson twenty years ago, scoring additions every year that will

soon outnumber all we reckoned then,—in the light of all these facts, and many others of like character, it surely may be said, "As dying, and behold we live," and with such vigor and expansion as we never had before.

But I must have no one suppose that this period of organized activity has been troubled by no controversy whatever. Because we have freedom of inquiry and religious liberty, and because some hasten slowly and others a little faster in the revision of their opinions, I am inclined to think that we shall always have some differences of opinion and policy, and that we shall wax warm about them, if we do not get red-hot. But I doubt if we are any worse on this account. Periods of difference in religious bodies are quite as often periods of prosperity and growth as periods of decadence. We have, in fact, had three somewhat memorable controversies in America during the last thirty years in our denomination. The formation of our National Conference in 1865 was the signal for the beginning of the first. Some wanted a creed of several articles as a banner for our organization. That had no chance. The proposition was defeated by an overwhelming vote. It would have been perfectly easy to frame a constitution that would have been true to all and agreeable to both parties, under which we could have gone on conquering and to conquer from that time till now. But what some wanted was "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence"; and they had their way, incorporating in the preamble of the constitution a phrase describing Jesus as our "Lord and Master

Jesus Christ," which, for a good many, carried with it a suggestion of authority inimical to spiritual freedom and a suggestion of official dignity unwarranted by the historic facts. There was a great debate, and it was renewed at Syracuse at the second meeting of the Conference which was established in New York. Indeed, what has been aptly called the "Battle of Syracuse" was one of the greatest meetings we ever had. I shall never forget the flaming eloquence of the Abolitionist hero, Charles C. Burleigh, as he appealed "from you to your Master," pointing to the words of Jesus on the frescoed wall; nor how Dr. Bellows had to hold down the top of his dear shining head after such an extemporaneous speech as only he could make. The battle was a victory for the conservative party; and that night upon the home-bound train the Free Religious Association was conceived, and duly born in Boston the next May. It detached many wholly from the Unitarian body, and gave many others room for their wider sympathies, while they still kept up their connection with the parent body, and tried time and again to bring the obnoxious preamble into better shape. As it now stands, there is an article of the constitution declaring that the preamble is only binding upon those who can agree to it. This miserable arrangement is likely to be done away with before long, a committee having been appointed at the last meeting of the Conference to this end, and their report having been made advising certain changes that would satisfy the scruples of the radical party and may be satisfactory to all concerned. Meantime the

broadening temper of the Conference has drawn back every year a greater number of those who were alienated from it by its earlier course.

What is known in our annals as the "Year Book Controversy" was a pendant of the controversy in and about the National Conference. The question mooted was whether the names of those who could not conscientiously appropriate the Christian name should appear in the Year Book of the Unitarian Association. It may seem a petty question; but it involved the question, What is Christianity, and What is Unitarianism? and the further question whether a man can be a Unitarian who is not a Christian. The personal centre of the controversy was the Rev. William J. Potter,* of New Bedford, after the Rev. O. B. Frothingham the President of the Free Religious Association, a preacher of the loftiest moral temper and the rarest intellectual gifts, his published sermons the best expression of our most characteristic thought to which we have yet attained, as calm as Channing's in their tone, but with an intellectual grasp which Channing never had, and a sweep of vision which was impossible before the orb of scientific truth had fairly risen and dispersed the misty exhalations of the dawn. The final outcome of the controversy was the admission to the Year Book, and by that sign to the denomination, in good standing, of all ministers who were in charge of Unitarian societies, and of all who had been so and had not withdrawn from the ministry. And so again we took the broader road which leads to the destruction

* Alive when this was written, he died Dec. 21, 1893.

of all artificial barriers between men who, if not of one mind, are of one heart and one soul.

And last we had our "Western Controversy." It came about through the attempt of certain earnest spirits to limit the fellowship of the Western Conference by a "statement of purpose," committing the Conference as such to a belief in Christian theism. In the great debate which followed, at its annual meeting, the Conference, refusing to limit its fellowship by any dogmatic test, welcomed all to come in and help who would fain build up the kingdom of righteousness and truth and love. This action, known as "the Cincinnati Resolution," was the signal for the withdrawal of many individuals and some churches from the Western Conference, and for the extension of the controversy in ever-widening circles, until the East hardly less than the West was included in their sweep. There was much more misunderstanding than real difference. The principal contestants for the broader way were men pre-eminent for their theistic ardor and the tenderness of their devotion to the memory and example of Jesus of Nazareth. What they have contended for has been simply a franker avowal of the National Conference position, putting first, however, the principle of generous inclusion, and then making a statement of "things commonly believed among us" wonderfully rich and strong, and expressly given as not covering all and binding none. I have no doubt in my own mind that we shall, as a denomination, ultimately come to this position, and that the wandering sheep will all come home at last, and that there will be one flock

and one fold, open on every side to pastures new. Long since the spiritual genius of Dr. Martineau, whom the Messianic phrase of the National Conference preamble would logically exclude from our fellowship, if it were made a test, sounded the note of highest courage when he said, "The true religious life supplies grounds of sympathy and association deeper and wiser than can be expressed in any doctrinal names or formulas; and free play can never be given to these genuine spiritual affinities till all stipulation, direct or implied, for specified agreement in theological belief is discarded from the bases of church union." Into the largeness of this liberty we are sure to come at length. Nor is it now a distant city sparkling like a grain of salt, but near at hand, and beautiful with unimagined light.

So it seemed to me in 1892 before the meeting of the Western Conference for that year. At that meeting a resolution was passed pledging the Conference to religious work in harmony with the Cincinnati Resolution and the "Statement of Things commonly believed among us." To many this appeared to be unnecessary, because sufficiently implied before; while some of the stanchest friends of the Cincinnati Resolution feared a construction prejudicial to that utterance. Further resolutions were adopted in 1893 which were satisfactory to both parties, and brought the painful controversy to a tardy end.

The fifty years which have gone by since Channing died in 1842 have seen great changes in the several worlds of politics and science and philosophy

and criticism and theology. They have seen the anti-slavery conflict, in which Channing and Parker took conspicuous and noble parts, culminating in civil war and in the destruction of slavery. They have seen science advancing, with a step ever more confident, to discoveries ever more magnificent, the doctrine of evolution central to them all, and giving them organic unity and life. They have seen philosophy driven back by science from the transcendental ground, and compelled to base itself upon experience. They have seen theology powerfully affected both by philosophy and science, and criticism in its treatment of the Bible making all things new with its discovery of the modern date of great portions of the Pentateuch and all the Psalms, if we take the Exile as the dividing line between ancient and modern in the Old Testament history.

And all of these changes have powerfully affected Unitarian thought and life. Nobody has been more sensitive to them than we. No sect has been less backward and more cordial in accepting the new ideas. But so it has happened that, while the philosophy for which Emerson and Parker were made anathema has passed into the keeping of the orthodox sects, the scientific philosophy which these have made anathema in its turn has become very generally the philosophy of Unitarian thought. So it happens that the critical results which Parker reached, and which his brother Unitarians could not endure, are now the commonplaces of the progressive orthodox. So it happens that the doctrine of the divine

unity now resumes a wealth of meaning in which, at first, it had no part. Science is but another name for the discovered unity of the world; and the unity of the world reflects as in a mirror the Unity of the Universal Soul. If any doctrine was more central to the Unitarianism of Channing than the unity of God, it was the Dignity of Human Nature. But, clearly, Channing's "one sublime idea," as he called it, has been vigorously challenged by the doctrine of heredity, and by the Darwinian theory of human origins. In the first particular, the gain of pity and compassion is much more than any loss entailed; while, as for the second, what seemed to wreck our faith in human nature has been its grandest confirmation. For nothing argues the essential dignity of man more clearly than his triumph over the limitations of his brute inheritance, while the long way that he has come is prophecy of the novel heights undreamed of that await his tireless feet. As it is here, so it is everywhere. If that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. It is through its inheritance from Priestley, in the main, that Unitarianism has been a movement of thought in sympathy with science. It is through its inheritance from Socinus and Milton and Locke and Price and Priestley and Channing and Parker that it has been a movement of conscience in sympathy with reform. And, as the former binds it to the religious interpretation of science, so does the latter bind it to intelligent cooperation with every movement that makes for the purification of our politics and the improvement of

our social life. Common worship is beautiful, and mutual incitement to the highest moral things is more than beautiful; but a church, or body of churches, which is not persuaded that the field is the world, and does not shape its life conformably to that persuasion, is a thing that cumbereth the ground.

II.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN.

In this course of lecture-sermons I wish to bring out as clearly as I can the distinctive doctrines of our Unitarian faith. They have not always been what they are now. In this respect they have not been singular. A Christianity that is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever is a theological fiction to which nothing real corresponds, as Cardinal Newman finally discovered, and so wrote his 'Development of Christian Doctrine,' endeavoring therein to establish a principle by which the extent of variation, without a difference of species, could be determined. But the Unitarian doctrine in regard to human nature has had more consistency from first to last than any other. The first Unitarians in the line of our development were the Hebrews and the Jews,— a distinction of historical succession merely, — the survival of whose fittest literature we have in the Old Testament. The general conception of human nature in the books of that collection, covering about eight centuries, is one of generous appreciation and noble self-respect. It is true that the doctrine of total depravity has backed itself up with as many texts from the Old Testament as from the New; as many from the Psalms as from Paul's Epis-

tles, if not more. But the individual self-abasement of the psalmists cannot be taken in evidence of a general estimate of human nature, and no more can the denunciations of the prophets hurled at specific criminals and crimes. Moreover, it is the opinion of our most learned scholar that only in the fifty-first Psalm do we find the depravity of human nature clearly taught: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Much more in consonance with the general view than this is the verse in the eighth Psalm: "Thou hast made him but little lower than God. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." The Septuagint reading, "but little lower than the angels," perpetuated by the King James translation, is sufficiently at variance with the Calvinistic view. The characteristic note of the Old Testament, and of Jesus in the New, is that, if a man will, he can obey the law of righteousness, and that, too, without divine interposition. He is the architect of his own fortunes.

> "It matters not how straight the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll;
> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul."

This language of the modern poet is nothing but a free translation of the average tone of the Old Testament and the earlier Gospels of the New. Jesus was always drawing inferences from the goodness of men to that of God: "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"; "For what man is there of you who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will

give him a stone; or, if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent?" Everywhere in the parables, and especially in that of the Prodigal Son, a human goodness furnishes an image and an argument for the divine.

If theologians had had only the words of Jesus, the first Christian Unitarian, to build upon, they would not have built one stone of their doctrine of man's total depravity upon another. But they have had also the Epistles of Saint Paul; and it must be confessed that, to paint human nature blacker than he sometimes painted it, or more incompetent, would be difficult, if not impossible. Augustine, Calvin, Edwards, have all dipped their brushes in his pot; and there has been enough in it for them and all their kind. The Unitarianism of Arius in the fourth century, so often treated as a novel heresy, was, in fact, the swan-song of the Unitarian orthodoxy of the earlier Church; and swan-songs are not sweet. His doctrine, while it saved the unity of God, saved nothing of "the excellency of Christ" for human nature. Indeed, the Athanasian doctrine, which triumphed over Arius, at Nicæa, in its identification of Jesus with God, while still affirming his humanity, was a doctrine much more honorable to human nature than that of Arius, which made Jesus a being *sui generis*, as far as possible removed from man, as near as possible to God, short of identity. The attractiveness of Athanasius — whom you must not associate with the seventh-century Athanasian Creed, but with the fourth-century Nicene — for many Unitarians is in virtue of the fact that they find in him

a blundering expression of "the divinity of man and the humanity of God," and of the one substance of all uncreated and created things.

For some centuries after the Council of Nicæa, in 325, the Unitarianism of Arius made a good fight for its life, and had many able coadjutors. At Nicæa the opposing doctrine conquered only because the Emperor Constantine threw his sceptre into the scale; and for a long time after the question which should finally prevail was simply a question which could get the strongest battalions — those of the imperial power — upon its side. Given a little more assistance from the secular arm, and the Unitarianism of Arius might have been the orthodoxy of the succeeding centuries for a thousand years. We, of to-day, have little reason to regret the actual course of history. It would seem that the doctrine of Arius must have been much more fatal to the human aspect of the life of Jesus, and the helpfulness implied in that, than the doctrine of the victorious party.

Once the doctrine of the Trinity had got fairly established in the sixth century or thereabout, there was very little Unitarianism in Christendom until the Protestant Reformation; that is, there was very little denial of the identity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But, though Augustine, looking "down into the unsunned depths of his breast,— into hideous gulfs of bottomless guile, into weltering abysses of insatiate lust,— and seeing the hells open,— hell underneath hell — in his darkling, selfish heart," inferred from this experience the total depravity of human nature; and, though his doctrine triumphed

over the more genial doctrine of Pelagius, nevertheless, as time went on, it was the doctrine of Pelagius, rather than that of Augustine that became the ruling doctrine of the Church. In our own time we have Roman Catholics assuring us that Romanism, and not Protestantism, must be the religion for America, because self-government and universal suffrage presuppose that human nature is not, as Protestantism teaches, radically corrupt. They certainly do; but, if God has made man upright, the political bosses have sought out many crooked inventions. The doctrine of Luther and Calvin on the human side was a reactionary doctrine. It went back to Augustine for the most horrible doctrines which his perturbed imagination had conceived,— the doctrines of total depravity and predestination. It was these doctrines rather than the Trinity or the Deity of Christ that made the first Protestant heretics. Zwingli taught that every new-born child — thanks to Christ's making alive of all those who had died in Adam — was as free from any taint of sin as Adam was before his fall.* Lælius and Faustus Socinus were the first Unitarians of the Reformation period out of whose thinking came a definite body of Unitarian belief and a definite Unitarian organization. These two were men whose reputation has been much spattered and obscured by the incalculable mud thrown at their followers by the more orthodox, but no sect in Christendom has representatives of whom it is more justly proud. It was no slight

*This brave old Zwingli had such appreciation of the pagan scholars, saints, and heroes that he anticipated the late Parliament of Religions by three centuries and half another.

departure which they made from the theology of their contemporary, Calvin, and those who thought with him. They broke with these at almost every point; and, while a great body of churches in Poland and Transylvania sprang from their thought, it was a long time before the Unitarianism of Great Britain and America reached the mark of their high calling. The earlier Unitarians in England and America for the most part took the Arian line; and, except for their anti-trinitarian ideas, they were in general agreement with the opinions of the majority. But there was no fixed rule. Richard Price, of London, was a belated Arian among Socinians,— Priestley, and Lindsey, and their kind; but it was his preaching in favor of the French Revolution that drew Burke's 'Reflections on the French Revolution' on his venerable head, and we may be sure that no man preached that way in 1789 who did not believe in human nature as something radically sound and good. And here in America it was not one of the radical Socinians, of whom there were a few, but one of the conservative Arians, of whom there were many, who made the doctrine of the dignity of human nature his "one sublime idea," set it in the forefront of his preaching, and rallied to its illustration and defence all that was best in his own nature, and in the fellowship of which he, William Ellery Channing, was the leading spirit. It was that illustration and defence that made the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Parker possible a few years further on. What was their doctrine but a corollary of Channing's dignity of human nature? Many

before Channing had asserted the dignity of human nature, notably one William Shakspere, in a passage which I need not quote, beginning, "What a piece of work is man!" But it was reserved for Channing to assert this dignity with such amplitude and consistency as had not been known before, and in his personal character to furnish the doctrine with such an argument and illustration as he could not send abroad upon his wingéd words.

The dignity of human nature! No other doctrine has been so central to our faith and work as this. It enters into all our other doctrines, leavening the lumpishness of what was dullest once, raising the meanest to some better height, compelling new interpretations, broader and truer than the old. Not all there was in it was seen by Channing when he first published it with glowing heart, nor even when he finished his course amidst the beauties of an outward nature as calm and peaceful as his own. All the denials and affirmations of Theodore Parker were contained in Channing's "one sublime idea," as the days are in the year and the stars are in the sky. Logically carried out, it meant the complete humanity of Jesus. Given such faith as Channing's in the possibilities of human excellence, and what need to claim for Jesus any superhuman quality? Within the wide space of humanity his greatness swings as freely as the earth amidst the various stars. Given such faith, and the Bible in its marvellous richness and its wonderful complexity seems an easy thing for human genius to create, no prophecy or psalm or gospel or epistle too ethically stern or

too spiritually exalting for man's normal delight in the infinite God and the law of the Eternal. Given such faith, and man's reason, conscience, and imagination furnish him with all needful revelation. Given such a faith, and not to hope for immortality — nay, not to heartily believe in it — would be quite the impossible thing. The dignity of human nature is not an inference from that, as many have imagined, inverting the true order of relations, but the immortality of the soul is a just inference from its present dignity and worth. So with the doctrine of the atonement. No magical appropriation of the merits of the blood of Jesus, nothing less than character, obedience, righteousness, could save the soul from the only real hell,— that of the great refusal to be what we may and can be, working out our own salvation, and God working evermore in us. And so on, through the whole range. There was not a doctrine held by the earlier Unitarians that Channing's "one sublime idea" did not make fluid and recast in some diviner mould.

But its practical implications were of more importance than those merely doctrinal. Certainly, they were so for Channing himself. Here was the root and ground, the motive, inspiration, spur, of all his philanthropic zeal. "What! strike a man!" was his sufficient argument against flogging in the navy. And for himself he asked no better argument against slavery, against intemperance, against debasing punishments, against the oppression of one class by any other, against the niggardly support of education by the town or state. In every man or

woman, white or black, educated or ignorant, good or bad, elevated or degraded, he saw the glory of the human,— if not a realized, then a potential fact. And it is so with every one who has entered faithfully into his spirit, whose appropriation of his "one sublime idea" is not merely nominal, but vital. If in the anti-slavery conflict, for all the thin-voiced and weak-kneed apologists for slavery that stood in Unitarian pulpits, there was a larger company who witnessed a good confession at whatever cost, it was because they had not sat at Channing's feet in vain. There are aspects of society in our own time which in Channing's time were not conspicuous. They have come from the development of our industrial organization, from the widening gulf which has been fixed between the employer and the employed by the stupendous changes that have taken place in methods of industrial production. But for these novel aspects the doctrine of Channing has as clear a word as if he had anticipated their utmost stress; and how often do I wish that he were here to make the application! For I hold that nothing is more sure than this: that underlying and overtopping every other necessity of our industrial organization is the necessity, on the part of the employer, of seeing in every workman at his forges or his looms, in his quarries or his mines, not merely so much "labor," and not merely an industrial machine, but a fellow-creature, a human being, a conscious soul, a brother man whom he must not treat with any least indignity or disrespect. Without this vision and this sympathy no legislative

ordering of our political economy will bring us much nearer than we are now to the mark of our high calling.

The changes in industrial organization are not the only changes that have taken place during the fourscore years that have elapsed since Channing's "one sublime idea" touched his thought with beauty and his lips with flame. And during these years it must be confessed that our theories of human nature have been subjected to a good deal of stress and strain by the changes which have overtaken our conceptions of man's physical and intellectual and moral history,— changes coming from the side of that great doctrine of evolution into which each several science is now pouring itself in an abounding stream. It must be confessed that the problems of human character are far less simple as they present themselves to us than as they presented themselves to Channing and his contemporaries. For one thing our studies in heredity have made it plain that every new-born soul is not that *tabula rasa*, that clean white sheet of paper, just like every other, which in the popular presentations of Unitarianism in its earlier course it often was. The parable of the talents is a parable of human inequality: only this ranges from one talent to five hundred instead of from one to five. Some men are born with aptitudes for virtue, some with aptitudes for vice. The will, however free, is in one case drawn by a stupendous energy in the direction of the good, and in another case by an equally stupendous energy in the direction of the bad. There have been many fluctuations

in the battle which has raged upon this ground. Buckle was a man after the early Unitarians' own heart so far as he did not believe in heredity at all. But, then, he did believe in the incalculable and enormous influence of the environment. Spencer, on the other hand, has made heredity the central principle of his philosophy, the inheritance of acquired variations being essential to his doctrine that the gain of evolution is transmitted, in the accumulations of experience, from one generation to another, not as a social tradition only, but registered in nerve and sinew, blood and bone. The most lively battle now proceeding in the scientific world is on this very ground. Spencer has encountered a most vigorous and confident antagonist in the German naturalist, Professor Weismann, whose doctrine of heredity does not admit of any transmission of acquired peculiarities. No use and no abuse of their original outfit, on the part of parents, has the least congenital effect upon their offspring according to the teachings of this new philosophy.

Here is a doctrine which has important bearings on our individual and social life. For all the learning with which it has been defended, it has not yet been established; not by a good deal: and Weismann has made more notches in his sword by his own grinding than have his enemies by their sturdy blows. He has abated so much from the first form of his doctrine that it is now, though different from Darwin's, and more different from Spencer's, very near akin to that of Galton, whose 'Hereditary Genius' is one of the most interesting

books the general controversy has brought forth. We have in Galton's a doctrine of heredity which denies much less confidently than Weismann the transmission of individually acquired traits, and which narrows much less than he the path of prenatal influences, especially of the mother on the child. But all prenatal influences he insists are not hereditary,—a distinction which will not impress the average mind as practically a difference.

Be these things as they may, the doctrine of heredity rather gains than loses in significance, if it prevails after this manner rather than after that of Spencer. Only, if this happens, the doctrine becomes much less appealing to parental virtue; there is no longer occasion to say of the unborn children, "For their sakes we sanctify ourselves." The working of heredity is much more than before that of a blind and helpless fate for good or ill, though certain of its larger implications still remain. And in the mean time the fact remains, however caused, that human nature presents no such equality and lucidity to our recent science as it did generally to the Unitarians of Channing's generation. But the inequality does not impeach the dignity. The range is wide, but its inclusions on the higher side are so magnificent that it can well afford the lower and the lowest in the scale. Then, too, the lowest natures frequently manifest traits that ally them with the highest, and put to shame the conventional moralities of the professionally pious. Consider, too, how much of grievous fault is but the exaggeration and the overplus of appetites and passions of

which we need not be ashamed. Consider yet again how marvellously responsive many of the lowest are to the touch of sympathy and love. Suppose the upshot of the battle, now raging so fiercely between Spencer and Weismann, should be the complete discomfiture of the former,— an event which I do not anticipate,— we should gain more upon the side of the environment as determinative of the good or evil of the individual life than we should lose upon the side of inherited acquisitions. Indeed, upon this side, the gains are clear and steady independently of the immediate question in dispute. How often do the children that are born of ignorance and lawless passion, of intemperance and crime, where they have been sequestered from the influences of their congenital environment, develop in due time the noblest manly strength, the rarest womanly perfection! The dignity of human nature stands approved in the ability of the most basely born to reach the heights of intellect and will; in the nobility that is bound by its advantages to service of the miserable and perishing. In seven generations there accumulate more than two thousand possibilities of heredity for each new adventurer. More than a match for these, in the majority of cases, is the environment of thoughtful love which can be built around the growing child to shield him from all harm. Nay, but we should not know how great our human nature really is, were it not for these contrasting depths and heights. We would have none continue in sin that grace may abound in others; but we cannot but be glad that a Leo X. compels a Luther to

stand forth, a Philip II. and an Alva bring a William the Silent safe to his political birth, a pig-headed George of England means Sam Adams and John Adams and George Washington in America, the slavocracy of the South means Garrison and Lincoln and a mighty company who were fellow-laborers with these. From the abstractions of philosophy and the ballooning of speculative science, they that are wise will often turn to the pages of history, to the records of personal greatness, to their own knowledge and recollection of the most exalted character and worth.

It will be impossible for them to contemplate the spectacle of so many men and women of great name and high example, or of private goodness and fidelity, without assurance that the dignity of human nature is not at the mercy of any doctrine of heredity, no matter whose or what. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." So said the writer of old time. And what say we? "Beloved, still are we the sons of God, whatever we have been in those from whom we draw the bane or blessing of the life we call our own."

Whereupon suddenly and sharply we are told that the dignity of human nature must not only reckon with the inequalities of human life and the mysteries of hereditary taint, but also with the descent of man from lower animal forms. Here is something which did not enter into the most prophetic calculations of the earlier Unitarians, and it must be confessed that to many of the later ones it has been

an unwelcome and annoying guest. How would the Calvinists rage, and the orthodox imagine a vain thing! And yet, strange as it may appear, it was not the Calvinists to whose aid Darwin had seemed to come after a fashion, but the Unitarians whose exalted estimate of human nature he had seemed to seriously impeach, who were among the first to accord to him a patient hearing, and afterward a general acquiescence. And with what loss, if any, of their confidence in the dignity of human nature? With none whatever, albeit with some better understanding of the stress of certain motions in our blood, some happier confidence that what the theologians have called original sin is some inheritance from far-off ancestors of whom we have no call to be ashamed. We are too prone to think that all that we inherit from the lower animals is a deduction from our proper nature. But the distinction of lower and higher has in it a good deal of human vanity. We should be no lower than we are if we could swim like the fish, see like the hawk and float as he does in the upper deeps, run like the deer, and wrestle like the pard. Are not the most of us such miserable weaklings that we might well desire that we had inherited more of the primitive ancestral brawn, had more of the original Bersark marrow in our bones? Plotinus was ashamed of his body,— with good reason probably,— like many of the Christian saints. Here and there we have seen a reversion to that sentiment, coming from two quarters, contempt for the ladder by which we have reached the top of animal life, and insistence on "spirit"

as the only real thing by our friends, the Christian Scientists, and such as they. But who more spiritual than Novalis? and he said, "I touch heaven when I touch a human body." "Every muscle," said Theodore Parker, "is a good muscle, every bone is a good bone." And Browning sang: —

> "Then let us no more say,
> 'Spite of this flesh, to-day
> I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole.'
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry, 'All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul.'"

You that despise the body, buy a first-rate 'Anatomy and Physiology': read and study that. Look at the Venus of Milo and Michel Angelo's Dying Captive, and remember it was Michel Angelo who said,—

> "Nor hath God deigned to show himself elsewhere
> More clearly than in human forms sublime."

You that despise your animal birthright, learn from the biologist that every substance, every cell, and every tissue of your body is the same as in the mammals next to man, and farther back, and that they are as beautiful and good as God can make. Tennyson is always flouting at the tiger and the ape in us, as if they were all of our inheritance. But the world is big enough for apes and tigers, too; and I am glad of that. "The young lions roar, and seek their meat from God!" Good for the young lions! May they never suffer lack! Be far from us that conceit which regards the steps of animal creation, from the proto-

zöon up to man, only as so many steps toward man, and not each good in itself, even as each successive stage in a delightful journey which brings us to some happy goal. "It is not the goal, but the course, that makes us happy," said Jean Paul. Nay, but in this matter it is both the course and goal.

The dignity of human nature is not in the least impeached by these considerations of the connections and resemblances of animal and human life. Man is a cup which the Eternal Power has had for many million years upon his wheel and 'neath his moulding hand. Therein I read, in part, the worth and dignity of what has taken shape and beauty from his plastic stress. Whatever the Eternal *might* have done, what he *has* done is plain enough. He has taken millions and billions of years to bring forth man from the ascidian,—about half a million from the time when first he fairly got him on his feet to bring him to his present amplitude of life. And have we not a perfect right in the long way that we have come to find a hint and prophecy of the long way we are to go? As yet we have not reached the half-way house upon the mountain of our great endeavor. The highest summits that now beckon us are only foot-hills to that top and crown on which humanity shall be transfigured into the image of that glory which it had in the beginning before the world was with God. Nay, but we cannot think of any possible achievement that shall end the endless quest.

"The sun is but a morning star."

Now, there are those who find no deduction from

the dignity of human nature in the past history of the race who confess themselves staggered by the prospect which speculative astronomy opens to their view; that is, the prospect of an ultimate collapse of our whole mundane order, the degeneration of the earth to the condition of the moon,

> "A gray, wide, lampless, dim, unpeopled world,"

throwing itself at length in sheer despair upon the fiery bosom of the sun. This prospect, it must be confessed, does not agree with the idea that in a perfected humanity upon the earth we have a sufficient substitute for personal immortality. This prospect resolves the spectacle of universal life into the play of children on a sandy beach, who comfort one another by singing as they work,—

> "Perhaps, if we hurry very much,
> And don't lose a minute of the day,
> There'll be time for the last lovely touch
> Before the sea sweeps it all away."

In the phrase of Omar Khayyám, the caravan would reach "the nothing it set out from." But, if that were so, we should not cry with Omar Khayyám, "Oh, make haste!" No, as the disciples said to Jesus, "It is good for us to be here." Such a prospect does not impeach the dignity of human nature, but it does impeach the husbandry of heaven. The Scotch woman, asked what she would say to God's damning her forever, answered, "An' if he does, he'll lose mair than I do." If the prophecy of the speculative astronomers is made good, and there be

no personal immortality, God will lose more than we shall by the transaction. We shall have had our day, — our love and laughter, our sunshine and sweet rain, our work and rest; and "we know that what has been was good." But can God afford such prodigal destruction of his work? Why not? there are so many stars in heaven. But without personal immortality, unless our speculative astronomers are "all wranglers and all wrong," there will come a time when the whole process of terrestrial development will be as if it had never been. So help me God, I can no otherwise than think some better thing of him than that. And, if the speculative astronomers are right, then we have one great, sad reason more for an unconquerable hope and stout assurance of a spiritual immortality that shall justify the ruin of the physical environment in which the soul has nourished for a time its half-unconscious life.

Another challenge to the dignity of human nature has come from those for whom the greatening universe and the greater God which it implies have dwarfed mankind into a hopeless relative insignificance. What said the Psalmist? "When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man?" And if the Psalmist was so impressed, how much more must be the modern man, for whom the heavens are so much more vast and wonderful than they could be for him? But *pari passu* with the enlargement of the sidereal universe there has been an enlargement of humanity. It is man who has

read the secrets of the heavens. He has weighed the stars as in his hand. He has measured them as with a surveyor's chain. And hence he is more wonderful than they.

> "Thou gazest on the stars, my soul: *
> Oh, would that I might be
> Yon starry skies, with thousand eyes,
> That I might gaze on thee!"

Moreover, it is evident from our latest studies that we are as far from fathoming the mysteries of the human brain and mind as we are from fathoming the mysteries of the heavens. And when to the mysterious greatness of the mind we add on the one hand the wonder and beauty of the physical organism, and on the other the tragedies of misplaced and disappointed and the exaltations of triumphant love, the heroisms and devotions of the moral life, the splendors of the imagination, the trust of broken hearts which cry, "Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in him!" — if we cannot "still suspect and still revere ourselves," still front with unabashed demeanor the greater universe and the greater God which science has revealed, it is because we have not individually the mind to enter into and appropriate the most obvious meaning of the things that press upon us day and night.

The apostle promised those to whom he wrote that they should be like God, for they should "see him as he is." "We *are* like him," rejoins our mod-

* "My love" in the original. I am indebted for the variant to Dr. Horatio Stebbins, and think it a stroke of genius.

ern thought, "because we *do* see him as he is." All genuine appreciation means a common mind. It is so between man and man. No Shakspere or Rembrandt or Beethoven in you, and no appreciation of their glorious art. It is so between man and God. An intelligible universe must be intelligent. The converse of the proposition is as true. The order of our notions and ideas means the order of the universe; and our apprehension of that order means, as Channing said, that "all minds are of one family," that we have the mind of God, and by that sign are now the sons of God, and not merely in some future tense.

> "Were not the eye itself a sun,
> No light for it could ever shine:
> By nothing Godlike could the soul be won,
> Were not the soul itself divine."

The power in us to read the laws, to hear the harmonies, to appreciate the beauty of the world, is proof of our celestial mind as absolute and glorious as we can ask or dream.

So, then, having attended to each separate challenge that our doctrine of the dignity of human nature has received from modern thought, we may, I think, conclude that the doctrine of the dignity of human nature has suffered no detriment, no diminution, from the changes that have taken place in men's conceptions of the universe and human origins during the last half-century. The more we know of geology and biology and anthropology and archæology, the more significant and grand must

seem the human nature for which there was such costly preparation, whose physical constitution is such a marvel of infinitely delicate and beautiful co-ordinated powers, whose prehistoric training brought about a change only less signal than the whole extent between the animal and man, whose historic manifestation has been a splendid and victorious march, illuminated by the heroisms of men and women of whom we may not say, "The world was not worthy," but who were worthy of the world and of an immortal destiny.

And even if it were not so, if the teachings of science were apparently conclusive of an origin and an inheritance fatal to all worth and dignity in man, and if the examples of history and experience only tended to confirm this verdict by their apparent balance on the side of weakness and injustice, extravagance of passion and infirmity of will, the dignity of human nature might still hope to come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, if only those in doubt would turn from every outward evidence, and look in upon the mystery and wonder of their own throbbing hearts. What passions surging there, what infinite desires, what unconquerable love! and, calm and strong amid the turmoil and the conflict, the moral will, the conscience pronouncing its inexorable laws, issuing its imperial mandates, proclaiming its imperishable satisfactions and rewards. I hold with one in whom the dignity of human nature found a splendid illustration, Orville Dewey, that there is no greatness of fame, no splendor of reputation, that is worth a millionth part of what we all

possess in our own powers of thought and love and consecrated will. The humblest man has that within him greater than the greatest name. "Fear not: thy vessel carries Cæsar," said the conqueror to his captain, when the winds were loosed and fearful was the sea. And whatever storms of science and philosophy, and whatever black experience of others' wickedness, may smite our sense of human dignity and worth, we need not fear if with us sails that greatest conqueror, that righteous will, in whose captive train rebellious passions walk with downcast eyes, and in the grandeur of whose triumphs emperors and kings have been abased below the level of the poorest creatures subject to their sway.

III.

CONCERNING GOD.

UNITARIANISM is named after its doctrine of the Unity of God, at least in popular apprehension. This apprehension would not be correct, were it quite certain that the name was originally applied to certain "Uniti" in Transylvania, a league of sectaries in support of mutual toleration among Roman Catholics and Calvinists and Arians and Socinians, and that the name stuck to those affirming the Divine Unity because they were the most active members of the league.* Such an origin is a happy one for our associations with the word; but, after all, what gives words their meaning is not their origin, but their historic use. And to make the word "Unitarianism" to-day with all its splendid connotations mean what it originally meant in Transylvania, if it originated there in the manner indicated, would be like thrusting an oak or eagle back into the germ from which it came. Even the doctrine of the Unity of God's personality ceased long ago to exhaust the meaning of Unitarianism. Even as accepted by Channing and his generation, the word meant a great deal more than that. To read Channing carefully, or even casually, is to see that the doctrine of the Trin-

*A matter about which our most learned doctors, J. H. Allen and Alexander Gordon, are not well agreed.

ity was the least part of his objection to the orthodox system. The greatest part of it was the moral, the immoral, character of God as represented by that system and its contemptuous estimate of human nature. Moreover, or rather as a part of his "one sublime idea" of the dignity of human nature, the Unitarianism of Channing meant the right and duty of individual judgment in matters of belief, and that character is more than creed.

Unitarianism as a doctrine of the Unity of God is much older and much wider than the Christian Church. Judaism was not Unitarian (monotheistic) from the earliest times, but it was for about eight centuries before the birth of Jesus. And there was a good deal of Unitarianism outside of Judaism, the most of it implicit. For underlying and overtopping all the different polytheistic schemes, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, there was the sense of the divine, coming to clearer consciousness in philosophic minds, but seldom wholly absent from the most simple and untaught. That the early Christian Church was Unitarian in the sense of being monotheistic is evident from the fact that the early Christians were mainly Jews, the earliest Jews without exception. And the Jews were nothing if not Unitarian. If Jesus had presumed to claim for himself identity with God, he would not have been taken before Pontius Pilate. He would have been summarily despatched. The fact that the first theoretic conception of Jesus was as the Jewish Messiah makes the idea of his original deity absurd, for the idea of deity no more entered

into the conception of the Messiah than it enters into our idea of the President of the United States.

The doctrine of the Trinity * only very gradually succeeded to the Unitarianism of the early Christians. This doctrine did not reach its term, as many think, at the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D. What then reached its term was the deification of Jesus. Then the unscriptural doctrine of Athanasius triumphed over the scriptural doctrine of Arius. I do not mean that the doctrine of Arius is taught consistently in the New Testament, but that it finds plenty of proof-texts in the Pauline Epistles and the Fourth Gospel. But, if the process of development had ended at Nicæa, the orthodox doctrine of the centuries would not have been a doctrine of the Trinity, but a doctrine of the duality of the divine nature. It took two or three centuries more to develop the personality of the Holy Spirit and its coequality with the Father and the Son. We have lately been through a series of centennial celebrations, and a century seems to us a long time. It took six centuries to establish the doctrine of the Trinity. Still more recently we have had our Columbian celebration. That has carried us back four centuries. You must have two more to carry you forward from Jesus to the Athanasian Creed which marks the absolute triumph of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was no mushroom growth. Six centuries back from now would take us back to the

* Strictly speaking, this doctrine is not opposed to monotheism, which affirms the unity of God's being. The doctrine of the Trinity also does this; but it affirms his triple personality, which the Unitarian denies. That God is unipersonal is the characteristic Unitarian affirmation.

crusades. The doctrine of the Trinity was a long time coming, and it came to stay for a long time. Nearly a thousand years went by before there was any serious doubt; though here and there a Schoolman — Abelard, for example, in his avoidance of a Trinity which insisted so much on the threeness that there was no oneness left — swung over into a practical Unitarianism, making the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit manifestations of an Eternal Unity. And this was the heresy of Servetus when, as a young man of twenty or twenty-two summers, he wrote his *De Trinitatis Erroribus*,— 'False Views of the Trinity.' Fifteen years later he more fully developed his heresy, the Sabellianism of the early Church, and sent the manuscript of his new book, 'Christianity Restored,' to Calvin, not knowing apparently the manner of his spirit, soliciting his critical comment on the argument. The manuscript was not returned. It was kept against a rainy day, a day when the wrath of Calvin rained fire upon Servetus. So simple-minded was Servetus that he would have visited Calvin, that they might hold sweet counsel together. Calvin did not encourage him, but wrote to Farel, his fierce coadjutor, "If he should come, only let my authority prevail, I will never let him go away alive." He came in 1553, and the authority of Calvin prevailed. He was burned to death October 27 in "a fire of green oak fagots with the leaves still on," which prolonged his sufferings two hours. He was a man of great but irregular genius, of boundless industry, of insatiable curiosity, of kindly disposition. The progressive orthodox of our own time

have the best claim upon his thought, and they should build his monument. Apparently, he was even further from Calvin's doctrine of total depravity than from his doctrine of the Trinity; and Jonathan Edwards's idea that little children are "vipers, and infinitely worse than vipers," had for him no attraction. Witness this prayer of his which has been saved for us, as by fire: "Most merciful Jesus, Son of God, who with such token of thy love didst take little children in thine arms and bless them, bless now and by the hand of thy power guide these little ones, that by faith in thee they may be sharers of thy heavenly kingdom. O most gentle Jesus, Son of God, who from thy birth wast wholly free from guilt, grant that we may abide without guile in the simplicity of these infants, that the kingdom of heaven which thou hast declared to belong to such may so by thy favor be kept for us, and by thy boundless mercy may they, made humble in spirit, be gathered into it."

In the same century with Calvin and Servetus came a brace of real Unitarians, the uncle and nephew, Lælius and Faustus Socinus, for whom the Unitarians of England are called Socinians to this day. Strangely enough, the elder of these men was on friendly terms with Calvin at a time when it would seem that his heretical opinions must have been definitely formed. Calvin was a genuine scholar; and it was, no doubt, the profound scholarship of the uncle that attracted him. The break which these men, uncle and nephew, made with the current orthodoxy was as radical as any ever made

by a theological reformer. It swept the whole gamut of doctrine,— Trinity, Deity of Christ, total depravity, personality of the devil, vicarious atonement, and eternal hell. The doctrine of Arius did not satisfy the Socini any more than Servetus, but for a different reason; for Servetus insisted on the identity of Christ and God, even as the sun's light is identical with the sun. But the Socini were humanitarians. Christ for them was a man endowed with miraculous powers. Nevertheless, Faustus declared him to be an object of worship and petition; and it was the refusal of the brave Hungarian Francis David to accede to this position that made his life and death a tragic martyrdom. Servetus died, and left no sign of a religious body organized about his name. Lælius Socinus followed his example. But Faustus Socinus organized in Poland a Unitarian church which had great numerical and moral strength, and flourished for well nigh a hundred years. In 1660 it was destroyed by the strong arm of persecution; but its Hungarian offshoot still nourishes a vigorous life, and has more than one hundred congregations cherishing its best traditions and a lofty hope.

To trace the growth of Unitarian doctrine in England is less a matter for a lecture on the Unitarian doctrine of God than for a general lecture on the Unitarian development, or for one on the Unitarian doctrine concerning Jesus. Suffice it now to say that the first English Unitarians sometimes inclined to the Arian deviation from the Nicene doctrine, and sometimes to the Socinian deviation. John Locke, John Milton, and Sir Isaac Newton were all

Unitarians in the Arian manner, which made Jesus only a little less than God, but an entirely distinct person. During the eighteenth century the Arian type still lingered here and there, but it was much less prominent than the Socinian. Price, Belsham, Lindsey, and Priestley were all Unitarians; but Price, the friend of Franklin and the antagonist of Burke, was of the Arian color, the others of the Socinian. At the outbreak of the Unitarian controversy in this country in 1815 it was three to one, or ten to one, the other way. Thirty years before this King's Chapel was our first Unitarian church; and it was that presumably with the Socinian bias, Dr. Freeman having been in sympathetic correspondence with Lindsey and Priestley and Belsham. The correspondence came out in Belsham's Life of Lindsey; and Dr. Morse, who made Morse's geography for our parents and grandparents, pounced upon it like an ant upon an aphis, and made a book to show up the Unitarianism of others besides Dr. Freeman. And then Jeremiah Evarts, the father of our William M., made an article on the book, to rub in the injurious accusation. And so the Unitarian controversy was begun. The book and pamphlet were both bent on convicting the American Unitarians of the opinions of the English humanitarian Socinians. But Channing and the most of his coadjutors repudiated those opinions. They were not less Unitarian than their English brethren, but they wore the doctrine with a difference. They were Arians. Their Jesus was a being unlike any other in degree or kind, pre-existent, superangelic;

as Dr. Parkman, father of the historian, put it, "but one iota less than God." As time went on, the number of the Arians grew less and less, that of the Socinians more and more. And from the first the American Unitarians were stoutly opposed to making Jesus an object of worship on account of his post-mortem heavenly exaltation after the manner of Faustus Socinus.

Indeed, the worship of Jesus equally with God was one of the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity that was most repellent to the mind of Channing and his spiritual friends. The "arithmetic of heaven," as Daniel Webster called it, was never prominent in their argument and thought. It was the moral implications of the doctrine, not its numerical excess and contradiction and absurdity, that made their revolt from it so sharp and stern. 'Unitarian Christianity most Favorable to Piety' was the subject of Channing's mighty sermon at the dedication of the Second Unitarian Church in New York. It was, in truth, always his subject, but then and always a part of it, and not the whole. The other part then and always was 'Unitarian Christianity most Favorable to Morality.' It was most favorable to piety because it concentrated the energy of devotion on one infinite object instead of distracting it by the rivalry, however generous, of three; because it left the spirituality of God unspoiled, unharmed, by the concreteness of a human image; because of the simplicity of one God, the Father of all, as compared with the complexity of a being three in one and one in three, so baffling to the imagination; because it

thought it robbery to take from God the Father every more winning attribute and loving attitude, and assign such to the Son or Holy Spirit, leaving to God little or nothing attractive to the affections of the heart. What wonder that Henry Ward Beecher, expressing the inevitable outcome of this method, said: "Jesus Christ is my God. All that there is to me of God is bound up in that name." All that he cared to cherish. But that in the traditional system which offended Channing most was the part which it assigned to God the Father in the division of labor between the different members of the Trinity. He never dipped his pen in blacker ink than when he wrote of this, declaring that, in the Trinitarian system, God "had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity," wholly innocent of blame. What wonder, he demanded, that men's thoughts and men's affections turned from the God of such transactions to the victim of his stern decrees! But this was not the worst. The imitableness of Christ's character and the imitableness of God's character were the double prop of Channing's moral lever with which he fain would move the world. The latter was the subject of his discourse at Dr. Farley's ordination; and that discourse soars, to my thinking, far above the epoch-making ones at Baltimore and New York. But what was there imitable in the character of God as displayed by the Trinitarian system? What was there worthy of imitation in a being the following of whose example

would make monsters of us all? "It is plain," he said, "that were a human parent to form himself on the universal Father, as described by Calvinism,— that is, were he to bring his children into life totally depraved, and then pursue them with endless punishment,— we should charge him with a cruelty not surpassed in the annals of the world; or were a sovereign to incapacitate his subjects in any way whatever for obeying his laws, and then torture them in dungeons of perpetual woe, we should say that history records no darker crime." We must remember here that Channing was speaking of the Calvinism of his own time, and not of that of ours, as different from the other as a painted from a real flame. We must remember that the least part of the effect of the Unitarian controversy was the separate Unitarian body: a much greater part was the adumbration of Calvinism in the orthodox churches till it no longer made the impression of horror and revulsion which was its natural operation.

Here, then, was the gravamen of Channing's charge against the Calvinism of his time. It was what he called "the moral argument against Calvinism." It was his great argument. It was bad enough that the traditional system was unfavorable to piety. That it was at the same time unfavorable to morality in that it made the Almighty not a being to imitate, but one whose example was pernicious and abominable,— this was the most unkindest cut of all. For Channing was nothing, if not ethical; and it was the ethical inadequacy of the Calvinistic God that set his face against the Calvinistic system

with a severity that the general sweetness of his temper brought out in sharp relief. We read in the New Testament of "the wrath of the Lamb"; and there is no better commentary on that phrase than the wrath of Channing's gentle heart poured out upon the system of theology which solicited men's reverence and worship for a being infinitely deserving of their horror and their scorn.

In a former lecture we saw that the doctrine of man as promulgated by the Unitarians of Channing's generation had been variously challenged by the subsequent developments of scientific thought. It has not been otherwise with the doctrine of God. But, if there has been challenge, there has also been abundant confirmation. What was the special contribution of Theodore Parker to our Unitarian thinking but his clear insistence that the true and perfect unity of God was no more consistent with a duality of operation, natural and supernatural,— natural and revealed religion,— law and miracle,— than with a trinity of persons? There were those who would have cast him out from the Unitarian body, but they never did; and in all sincerity he was the noblest Unitarian of them all. "One God, one law, one element." The Unitarians before Parker had affirmed the one God, but with a double operation; Parker affirmed "one law," and so made the divine unity more perfect and complete. He found in all religions different aspects and degrees of the one seeking of mankind for God. In all ancient scriptures, Hebrew, Indian, Iranian, Egyptian, Greek, the records of that seeking were inspired just in propor-

tion as they were inspiring, and no more. He found in Jesus the bright flowering and the wholesome fruit of powers that are not wholly strange to any man of woman born. And so it happened that he enriched the Unitarian name with a wealth of meaning it had never had before. For not only to the numerical and moral unity of God which Channing had affirmed did he add the unity of the divine operation in all matter and all spirit, but also the unity of all religions in their common root in human nature, and the unity of Jesus with all men in a common spiritual life; while he made the spiritual unity of God and man, which Channing also had affirmed, far more consistent than it could be while the miraculous sonship of Jesus orphaned all his brethren. It was right, then, for Parker to insist upon his right to keep the Unitarian name and continue in its fellowship. It was right for him, when the conservatives wanted him to withdraw, to tell them that really he couldn't do it conscientiously, and to ask them, "Couldn't they withdraw?" Why not? He was more Unitarian than they.

It was Parker's sympathy with science, in reality though unconsciously stronger than his sympathy with philosophy, that made him a prophet of the Divine Unity declaring itself in the uniformities of natural law. But among Unitarians generally sympathy with science was not remarkably characteristic of the period — say from 1835 to 1855 — during which Transcendentalism was in the ascendant. Then it began to grow, and soon it mightily increased. This meant that the Unitarian doctrine of God must

be profoundly affected by the development of science. Now, this development meant for one thing, or, rather, for two things, a tremendous enlargement of the universe in terms of time and space; and the vaster universe implied the vaster God. To call God infinite was one thing: to realize his infinitude was quite another. To realize his absolute infinitude was, of course, impossible. But the extension of the universe in terms of time and space created for the imagination a practical infinitude which could practically be realized. When the six thousand years of Genesis were made six million years, and the width of the heavens and the multitude and vastness of the stars were correspondingly increased, the later Unitarian could say with the Psalmist, "O God, thou art very great," with a meaning in the words of which the Psalmist never dreamed. But the new awe which fell upon our minds from the immensities of science was matched with a new wonder from the microcosmic side, from the infinitesimal niceties and adaptations of the organic world.

> "So great is littleness, the mind at fault
> Between the peopled speck and starry vault
> Doubts which is grander, and with tender awe
> Adores their equal God whose perfect law
> Sustains them in eternity or time:
> Greatest or least ineffably sublime."

But there is a word of science that has had a much more special interest for Unitarians than the words of power and vastness which that benignant presence has sounded from the heavens, or the

words of mystery and wonder she has breathed from microscopic things. There should be nothing here which does not equally appeal to Trinitarians and Unitarians, save as the former may have staked their all upon the Biblical chronology. But the last word of science, its last and greatest word, is Unity; and how can the Unitarian heart but swell with joy at this tremendous confirmation of his thought, this great "Amen!" to his doctrine of the Divine Unity, echoing and re-echoing from all the heights, from all the depths, from all the vastness, all the infinitesimal smallness of the manifold and glorious world? Unity! This is the revelation of the spectroscope, showing with cumulative evidence that the chemical constituents of the sun and stars are the same as those of our own planet. Unity! This is the revelation of the correlation and conservation of forces, the most majestic generalization science has yet made, whereby we know that light, heat, magnetism, electricity, are all but variants of each other and manifestations of one central force which is in and through and over all of them. Unity! That is the meaning of the transmutation of species, a unity that binds all animal races and all animals and men together in one great family of the earth above and the deep that lieth under. Unity! This is the simple truth,— that everywhere the differences of the material world have yielded to the patient observation and experiment of science the proofs of an essential likeness and identity. Deep calleth unto deep. Fraternal salutations sound across from peak to peak, from star to star. What George Herbert

wrote of man is true of universal nature,— "Each part may call the farthest brother." It takes a poet to make some of the best discoveries. It was Goethe who discovered that every part of the plant is a modification of the leaf. What a unifying discovery here! How it takes the sting out of the familiar plaint, "Nothing but leaves"! The thousands of bushels of apples that have blushed to think of it, the millions of bushels of wheat and corn that feed the people of a continent, the tons of cotton that they wear, the wood that builds their habitations,— nothing but leaves! Ay, and the coal with which we warm ourselves and keep up our steam and make our infant industries to flourish,— nothing but leaves, all that! — leaves of the gigantic ferns of yesterday,— these, in their turn, but sunlight organized in root and stalk, so that, whether we warm ourselves at the grate or in the sunshine out of doors, it is the same sun that warms us everywhere. Goethe also suggested that the brain is but the topmost of the human vertebræ. Nature is not more prodigal than economical. If she wants an apple, she develops a leaf. If she wants a brain, she develops a vertebra. We always thought well of backbone; and, if Goethe's was a sound suggestion, we think better of it now.

Turn any way you will, you are confronted by this all-pervading unity. A resolution of apparent difference into essential likeness is the outcome of all science. The proofs of this are written everywhere in earth and sea and sky. They bloom in every flower, they glow in every star, they shine in every

face, they beat in every heart. Day uttereth speech of them unto day, and night showeth knowledge of them unto night. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. And all this unity of man and nature, of each in itself and of both in their connection and relation, is at the same time the unity of God, seeing that we can have no knowledge of the Unseen and Eternal save as we take counsel with the temporal and seen, and that only as we acquaint ourselves with man and nature can we acquaint ourselves with God. Whatever else the effect of science on our theology, it has incalculably enhanced the force and value and significance of our doctrine of the unity of God. There is no such Unitarian as Science. There is no better Unitarian literature than Tyndall's 'Heat considered as a Mode of Motion,' and Darwin's 'Origin of Species,' and Stewart's 'Conservation of Energy,' and the scores of similar books which in one way or another have exemplified the all-pervading unity of universal life.

It is not to be pretended that the advance of science has been in all particulars as favorable to our Unitarian doctrine as in the particular that is most characteristic,— that of the divine unity. The devotees of science have built many altars of late years to the unknown God, and invited us to come and worship him with them. The Unknowable, too, has altars of his own and those who serve thereat. Now, if by the unknown God is meant a God we cannot comprehend,— cannot, that is, know all about,— we have not much objection to the term. When we

have thought over all the things we know, we are compelled to say, "Lo! these are parts of His ways; but how little is yet known of him!" How little, yet how much! and, if we worship we know not what, it is only because we rationally and logically inform the vast of the unknown with an imagined power and wisdom, order, beauty, and beneficence, like to such as flood our spirits from the wide range of what we actually know. And this means that what we really worship is not the unknown, but the known,— that and the shadow of that projected on the void,— nay, the light of it which streams into the deepest depth of the abyss. What we know is such a little piece compared with the unknown that any inference from the former to the latter may appear unwarrantable. But what would you have? To argue from the known to the unknown is a law of our being. We can no more help it than we can help being hungry and thirsty and sleepy, no more than we can help thinking and loving. The name of this law is experience, and there is no other name given under heaven by which men can be saved.

But an unknown God is one thing, and an unknowable God is quite another. Were God unknown, we still might hope to know him soon or late. But the Unknowable! That means paralysis of effort from the start. Thank Heaven, it also means an abuse of terms, so reprehensible that the philosopher who is most responsible for it, now that he has exhausted his "unknowable" of all its terror and of all its meaning, ought frankly to confess his miserable mistake, and, if he can, before it is too late, ex-

punge the misleading term from every place where it appears throughout his works. It is too frequently forgotten that the same process of reasoning in the 'First Principles' of Spencer which makes God unknowable leaves the universe in the same limbo of inapprehension. Here is a fact which relieves the unknowableness of God from all those dreadful associations which it has connoted for the popular mind. For, however unknowable the ultimate concepts of science, we have evidently no special lack of scientific knowledge. If so much scientific knowledge in spite of fundamental ignorance, why not as much religious knowledge? There is nothing in the conditions of the problem which prevents this happy consummation. No one need be troubled that an unmanifested Infinite could never be found out, seeing that the universe is "full of visions and of voices." No one need be troubled that we know only the manifestations of "the infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed." To know that energy as infinite and eternal, to know that all things proceed from it, to know their quality, and in their light to read the character of the Eternal,— to know all this is to make that beggar phrase, the Unknowable, as rich as Crœsus with all saving knowledge. Do we know matter in its inmost essence? Do we know our neighbors or ourselves in that ultimate, absolute fashion? Certainly not, and yet we know them pretty well; and that which we call matter we know not *in itself*, but in ten thousand bright and beautiful and blessed ways, which we would not exchange for any knowl-

edge of its inmost essence. We know what we worship, and we worship what we know,— the manifested matter, the manifested friend, the manifested God.

Now, here, if anywhere, is where the development of our later thought means difference from the earlier, not in degree only, but in kind. Channing, so passionately enamoured of the spirituality of God, insisted that his incarnation in Jesus would be a deduction from that spirituality. In the inmost sanctuary of his mind, as in that of the temple of Jerusalem when Pompey drew aside the veil, there was no image of a God. And was he wrong in this? Shall we not say, Better none than one, one only? But shall we not further say, as Tennyson has said for us? —

> "The sun, the moon the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains,—
> Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
> Is not the vision He?"

Yes, only it is more than all the outward things. It is man as well as these. In him the vision shines as not in them. Not in Jesus only, but in all men and women, in all truth and goodness. The incarnation is a fact; but it is a fact not exhausted by Jesus, nor even by humanity,— by nothing less than the complete and perfect world.

> "God dwells in all, and moves the world and moulds,
> Himself and nature in one form enfolds."

And, unless the nature here includes human nature, the half has not been told. But it does include human nature. It did in Goethe's spheric mind.

The philosophers are welcome to their Absolute, a being without attributes, without predicates, without everything. Be ours the manifested God,—all nature and all men and women, more than the garment that we see him by, even the breathing substance of the universal Soul. As we commune with him at the unending feast of life, he gives us suns and moons and stars and galaxies, and says, "These are my body." He gives us the wine of health and heroism and devotion and self-sacrifice, and says, "This is my blood." He gives us the laws of science, and says, "These are my thoughts, which the Keplers and Darwins have thought after me." He gives us "the Lord Christ's heart and Shakspere's strain," and says to us, "These are my poems"; "This is my loving heart." How much better such a feast as this than the Barmecide feast of the abstract philosopher, with his Absolute empty of all attributes! How much better even than that feast which Channing spread! For all his spiritual deity is also here; but with how much besides!

But is He also here? That is a question which presses heavily on many hearts. They recognize that the revelation of science has been the revelation of a grander God. They recognize that his unity has been affirmed by myriads of voices from the depth and height. They recognize that all the sciences join in a great choral affirmation of the truth of those large words of the apostle,—"One God, who is above all and through all and in you all." But that is not exactly what he said; and what they question is whether we can say exactly what the apostle said,—

"One God *and Father of all*, who is above all and through all and in you all." If we cannot, they tell us that they do not care so much about the vastness of the greater God, and the wonder of his infinitesimal things, and the all-pervading unity which binds all things in one. "Show us the Father!" is their eager, passionate cry. Can Science answer them as Jesus answered Philip? "Have I been so long with you, and yet thou hast not known me?" Surely, it can. For, if there is one idea which, more than any other, science in all its branches has introduced into our conception of the world and God's relation to the world, it is the idea of organic development,— the idea that nothing is manufactured, nothing is made, by the Eternal Power, but all things are grown, evolved, unfolded, out of other things that have been before them. Now, the fatherhood of God is a sublime and daring symbol of this idea of organic development, and of the paternal and reproductive relation of every past to every present, and every present to every future, time without end. Many of our symbols of the infinite Being have fared ill enough through the developments of science,— Maker, for example, Creator, Governor, Ruler, King. These symbols are imbedded in the current language of religion, but they have been discredited by the advance of scientific truth, which has destroyed the mechanical conception of the world and equally the governmental conception of the Almighty. But, because the word "Father" expresses the idea of organic development, vital reproduction, and genetic relation as well as any word not purely scientific can express

it, it has been legitimated as a symbol of this truth; and we can say, with something more than metaphorical aptness, "One God and Father of all." Everything is symbolic here; and the most that we can demand of ourselves and one another is that our symbols shadow forth reality, and do not contradict it or manifestly oppose it.

But to save the name of Father as the symbol of a scientific order of ideas is not enough for the religious heart. What this desires with strong desire is to save all that was best in that name as it trembled upon Channing's lips, as it has trembled on the lips of millions since the disciples came to Jesus asking him to teach them how to pray, and he began, "Our Father, who art in heaven." And its desire is not in vain. For, where there is the childlike dependence, confidence, and trust, there is the Father's face, deep-mirrored in his children's eyes; and the whole course of science has tended to the strengthening of these sentiments. The invariableness of natural law implies our confidence in it as in a father's guiding hand, our rest in it as in a mother's fond embrace. Moreover, if the tendency of science has been to the disparagement of personality as an adequate symbol of the divine perfection, it has only been because the symbol falls so far below the infinite reality, not because God is less than personal. Let the materialists believe that! But materialism has no better standing with our latest science and philosophy than the chronology of Genesis or the idea, once seriously expounded, that the Pyramids are geological formations. And what better symbol

can we have than personality for the divine perfection, seeing that there is nothing higher that we know? The elements of personality are thought and will. Now it was no extravagance of rhetoric when Kepler said, "I think thy thoughts after thee, O God." The intelligible universe must mean the intelligent God. That which thought interprets must itself be thought. That which the mind interprets must itself be mind. Conversely, our ability to read the lessons of the intelligible world means that Channing did not err when he said, "All minds are of one family." And what more natural and inevitable than to translate the force of science into the will of personality? It is safe to affirm those things which our denials cannot but imply. When the would-be atheist sings after this fashion,—

> "Beneath this starry arch
> Naught resteth or is still;
> And all things have their march
> *As if by one great will*," —

Saul, also, is among the prophets. "As if by one great will!" Religion asks no more for the legitimation of her symbol of the second element of personality.

But thought and will are not enough. They do not show us the Father. We must have beneficence, affection, heart, before he is revealed.

> "By one great heart the universe is stirred,
> By its strong pulse stars climb the darkening blue;
> It throbs in each fresh sunset's changing hue,
> And thrills through every song of every bird.

"'Tis felt in sunshine greening the soft sod,
In children's smiling as in mother's tears;
And, for strange comfort, through the aching years
Men's hungry souls have named that great heart God."

Strange comfort, indeed, unless, however named, the great Heart is a heart of tenderness, a heart of love! For it is true, as Browning sang,—

"A loving worm within his clod
Were better than a loveless God."

But, if the great Heart of the universe be not a loving Heart, whence came the love, the tenderness, the pity, the compassion, that have made wonderful and beautiful the lives of countless men and women in all ages and all lands? The stream cannot rise higher than its source. Even if God were the creator, the artificer, it would be inconceivable that he should make a creature better than himself. But, when once he is apprehended as the organic source of universal life, it is still more inconceivable that a being better than himself should come forth out of him. Nothing is evolved that is not first involved. If that be not axiomatic truth, then are not things that are equal to the same thing equal to each other. Then are there no axiomatic truths. But, if this be an axiom, then is that Heart which we call God rightly so called, if God is good, if God is love. Then is all human love forevermore identical and consubstantial with his own. Does any say: "Why, then, you only have the human love; and it is no special help to know that that is also God's. There is no more love for us than there was before"? Nay,

but here also God is not only in and through, but he is over all, blessed forever. The human love we know which came forth from his heart is hint and prophecy and surety that in that heart there is a boundless deep of love which must express itself in myriad ways to us unknown, so that even in those things which are most terrible to think of and most hard to bear there well may be the touch of his pity, the sweetness of his affection, the swell and the submergence of his divine compassion; and, though many waters have gone over us, we can still hold our course, and cry,—

"Though my bark sink, 'tis to another sea."

And, seeing that these things are so, let us be confident that at no time before, in all its varied history, has our Unitarian doctrine of one God the Father taken up into itself such a wealth of meaning as it does in these last days. We do not pretend that the doctrine is for us exactly what it was for the fathers by whom we were begotten to a lively hope for man here and hereafter, and to a mighty faith in God. We do not pretend that all the change has been in the direction of a brighter and more joyous faith. Doubtless there has been loss as well as gain. Certainly, if we take up all the meaning of science into our theology, our God is made of somewhat sterner stuff than he to whom the fathers lifted up their grateful hearts. Our theology cannot be at once spiritual and cosmic, and not recognize that God is in the earthquake and the wind and fire as well as in the still, small voice of

conscience and the breathings of all pure affection and all perfect trust. However great the change, it leaves impregnable the oneness of the Almighty; it has brought to that oneness incalculable confirmation, furnishing it with a thousand splendid illustrations; it has, by its extension of the universe in time and space, assured to us a practical infinitude where we had but an empty name; by the revelation of invariable law it has given to us a fresh impulse of unconquerable trust; it has made God manifest to us in every aspect of the fair and teeming world, incarnate in all men and women; unknown in his most secret essence, as we are ourselves; well known in the order and the beauty of the world; a Father still in his organic evolution of the world; a Father still in that our thoughts are his thoughts, our ways his ways, our love forever his, all that our hearts contain a drop of his immeasurable sea. Even so, Father; for so it has seemed good in thy sight!

IV.

THE BIBLE.

The subject, What Unitarians have thought and now think about the Bible, is one very closely bound up with their history. The first Christian Unitarians were Jews, and their Bible was a very different one from ours. For one thing, it had no New Testament. Much of this was still unwritten at the end of the first century of our era. The second century was advanced to its third quarter before the last book was written, the 'Second Epistle of Peter.' That, however, did not mean that our New Testament was at once recognized as such. Two centuries more went by before a canonical list was made out and accepted as a new collection of Scriptures, deserving of equal reverence with the Old Testament. Before that, as Jacob and Esau wrestled in their mother's womb, there were many gospels and epistles and apocalypses contending for the mastery in the womb of the young Church. In a rough way, no doubt, we have the preservation of the fittest, though some better things were thrust aside, some poorer things retained. For a long time after the present list was made up some of the churches went on reading the excluded books. Evidently, in the earlier stages of this process the oral

transmission of the words of Jesus and his apostles was more highly valued than new writings, and discouraged the production of these. The New Testament writers had no idea that they were adding to the sum of Scripture. Paul's letters were as occasional as the exigencies of his apostolate, and not all of them have been preserved. The first collection of these was probably the first attempt at a new canon, — namely, a new authorized list; and that came from Marcion, who was accounted a heretic in his day. He, like the other Christian Gnostics, valued the Old Testament little, attributing it to some power inimical to God. But the Old Testament was the Bible, and the only Bible, of the *earliest* Christians. In the time of Jesus a third enlargement of it was well under way. There was much opposition to several of the books, that to 'Ecclesiastes' and 'The Song of Songs' being the last to give way, after the former had got an orthodox postscript, and the latter had received an allegorical interpretation. This conclusion was reached about a century after the death of Jesus. Still other books were not admitted for one reason and another. But the Christians were more generous, and made up a list of these at the same time that they made up the New Testament list as we have it. They are the books of the Apocrypha, to which Roman Catholics have accorded an equal honor with the rest of the Bible. So have the later Unitarians, but so have not the evangelical Protestants. The Episcopalian position with regard to them has, in accordance with its usual temper, been somewhere "betwixt and between." It should also

be remembered that the Old Testament of the early Christians was not a Hebrew book. It was the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew which was completed about 100 B.C. The New Testament quotations from the Old Testament are habitually from this. It was not till the sixteenth century that Christian scholars began to show an interest in the Hebrew text,—the Masoretic, established soon after the dispersion of the Jews. Whether this is any nearer the original Hebrew than the Septuagint, it is difficult, if not impossible, to decide. Meantime the countless and important differences of the Septuagint and the Masoretic text is dynamite to any theory of verbal inspiration except that of Dr. Briggs's critics, which is that the original autographs were verbally infallible. To prove that they were not is as impossible as to prove that the inhabitants of Jupiter's moons do not enjoy a republican form of government, if anybody says they do.

Dogmas grow more defined and rigid with the lapse of time, and we have reason to believe that the doctrine of Biblical inspiration was never held so rigidly by the early Christians as it came to be when its rigidity became a logical necessity for the Protestant apologist. From Arius to Socinus, about 1200 years, there was very little Christian Unitarianism in the world. But as it disappeared in the fourth century, making its appeal to Biblical authority, so it reappeared in the sixteenth. And, as the Bible responded much more cordially to the appeal of Arius than to that of his opponents, so, different was the Unitarianism of Socinus from that of

Arius, the Bible responded much more cordially to his appeal than to that of the Trinitarian party. All is flux in the New Testament doctrine of Christ's nature; but, while there is not one good Trinitarian text in any of its books, there are hundreds representing different Unitarian conceptions of Jesus, from the purely humanitarian up or down to the doctrine of Arius,—that he was a pre-existent, super-angelic being, only a little less than God. The doctrine of Socinus was an ingenious amalgam of the different and contradictory texts,—an amalgam upon which Trinitarian orthodoxy has broken its teeth from the sixteenth century until now.

John Calvin had in him the making of an able critic; and, where his dogmatic predilections did not have full play, he frequently attained to sound results. For example, he was the first to advance the opinion that some of the Psalms belong to the period of the Maccabees, the second century before Christ. But he was so much enamoured of his doctrinal system as a whole that he could not help finding that in the Bible, whether it was there or not. Servetus and the Socini, Lælius and Faustus, really seem to have gone to the Bible to find out what it taught; and, if he and they did not find exactly the same things, it was because, in the balancing of rival texts, the same texts did not at first lay hold of him and them, and that, too, with such violence as made the others subject to its stress. But this is the one thing in the history of Unitarian thinking about the Bible that I would have you make a note of and remember,—that it began its modern course, as it con-

cluded its early course, with a distinctly generous and ardent loyalty to the Bible. And the modern course it thus began it held to steadily as time went on. There were no Christian people who appealed to the Bible more confidently than the English Unitarians of the eighteenth century and the English and American Unitarians of the earlier part of this. It was because this Unitarianism was so Scriptural that it was Unitarianism of one form and another; for, studying the New Testament with minute and conscientious care, they found exactly that, and not anywhere the full-fledged Trinitarian doctrine. Their wisdom has been justified, not only of their children, but of the most orthodox, among whom to-day there is not a scholar who pretends that the full-fledged doctrine of the Trinity makes its nest in any part of the New Testament. The most that is contended for is that there are logical beginnings of opinion which, if carried out to their conclusion, would give a Trinitarian doctrine. So taught Cardinal Newman in his famous 'Development of Christian Doctrine.' So taught Neander, the great German orthodox scholar of the century. So teach all orthodox scholars, deserving to be called so, at the present time. The first great English Unitarians — John Locke, John Milton, and Sir Isaac Newton — were all men who had the Bible at their fingers' ends, and held to it as unreservedly as any of their orthodox contemporaries. That made them Unitarians. It was not otherwise with Priestley and Belsham and the great English Unitarians of the eighteenth century; and, if you would know

how sincerely and how strongly Scriptural was our own early Unitarian position, you must go to Andrews Norton's 'Statement of Reasons' or Noah Worcester's 'Bible Views of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' This Noah Worcester was the mildest-mannered man that ever cut a figure in religious controversy, not even Channing excepted.

Intensely Scriptural and therefore Unitarian,— that was the early Unitarian position. Intensely Scriptural, and therefore opposed to all "man-made creeds," so called, and statements of belief. We must beware of carrying back our present views and doctrines and opinions, and attributing them to our fathers in the Unitarian faith. We must beware of thinking that all early Unitarians were of Dr. Channing's breadth and liberality. He might be "surer that his rational nature was from God than that any book was the expression of his will." So were not the majority of his fellow-ministers. His objection to creeds was that in them the human spirit was cribbed, cabined, and confined; and that is also ours. But the general objection to them in his time was that none but Bible words were good enough to express Bible truths. The Westminster Confession might fortify itself with texts in triple row. No matter. The wording of the Confession itself was not Scriptural, but scholastic; and hence they would have none of it. You cannot make too careful note of this,— that it was the Scriptural enthusiasm of the early Unitarians which made their dislike of creeds so vivid and intense. "Man-made creeds": the amiable iteration of that pungent phrase is as ex-

pressive as anything could be of the Scriptural temper of our Unitarian progenitors.

But with the Scriptural temper a rational temper went along. You see that from the start. You see it not only in John Locke's 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' but also in the manner of his criticism of the Epistles of Saint Paul, always proceeding from the more to the less obvious meaning, making the former, not the latter, the standard of appeal. You see it in the continual insistence of the English Unitarians against the Deists that Christianity was a reasonable religion, and going far to make it so by their elimination of irrational elements. You will notice that in the Deistic controversy the divine authority of the Bible had no doughtier defenders than the Unitarians, and they defended it as a rational authority. One consequence of this temper was a profound distaste for all allegorical and mystical interpretations of the Bible; a stout insistence that its words had but one meaning, and that this was to be discovered by the grammatical construction, by the connection, by the habit of the writer's thought, and — I beg that you will notice this — by the average testimony of the Scriptures. These canons of criticism rained destruction on the orthodox camp. I suppose that from first to last thousands of people have wondered how it was that there could be so much difference of opinion as to the meaning of the Scriptures between the Unitarians and their opponents. There was abundant scholarship on either side. Yes, but there were two methods of interpretation,— the literal and the allegorical. If there had

been only one, and that the former, there would still have been some difference; but there would have been a great deal less. "Reverence for the Scriptures," says Professor Toy, "emphasizes its letter, but also, when a desired truth does not offer itself from the letter, seeks to discover a hidden meaning." The Old Testament was not Messianic enough for the early Christians, and so they allegorized it to their hearts' content. Not what it meant, but what it could be made to mean, was the important matter. It was precisely so with the Christians of the post-apostolic age. The New Testament was not Trinitarian enough for them; and so they allegorized it to their hearts' content. Cardinal Newman thinks they did right in this respect. He thinks that without allegorizing they would have gone under in the Arian controversy; and he says, "It may almost be laid down as an historical fact that the allegorical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together."

So said the Unitarians of fifty, seventy-five, one hundred years ago. Take the Bible words at their face value, and orthodoxy has no Scripture warrant. They took them so, and therefore they discarded orthodoxy. Were they right or wrong in so taking them? That is the previous question. Is there any reason for an allegorical interpretation of the Bible but that without one it does not satisfy the theological hunger of the critic? And is that any reason for it at all? No more than the physical hunger of a tramp is a reason for his allegorizing the eighth commandment so as to make it mean "Thou

shalt steal" when it is plainly written "Thou shalt not." Such an allegorical interpretation would hardly be more forced than many of those which Cardinal Newman thinks were justified by the necessities of the orthodoxy of the Christian Church.

You will remember, then, that the temper of our early Unitarianism was intensely Scriptural and at the same time intensely literal in its Biblical interpretation. But hence another struggle of conflicting elements, this time within the bosom of the Unitarian Church. For the distaste for allegorical and the inclination to literal interpretation came not only from a loyal devotion to the Scriptures, but also from a certain rational temper to which the allegorical method was naturally repulsive. But, as this rational temper increased with the advance of time, Unitarians found the same difficulty with the Bible that many of the early Christians found with it. They found things in it that did not seem reasonable, especially the various accounts of miracles in both the Old Testament and New. The growth of the scientific spirit, with its unbroken sequences of natural law, had much to do with this. And what was to be done? For one thing, perhaps, that set forth by Dr. Furness in his 'Remarks on the Four Gospels,' nearly sixty years ago. This was to naturalize, to rationalize, as much as possible of the miraculous in the Bible (more particularly in the New Testament), and for the rest to call it natural,—not contrary to law, but the expression of some higher law than that commonly at work. We know how good men were troubled by that book, and good

women so much that they wept for grief and shame that a young Unitarian minister should be such a heretic. But, if I am not much mistaken, a good deal of the opposition had a rational basis. Was not this method of Dr. Furness a new kind of allegorical interpretation? Was it not a declaration that the words there in the Bible did not mean what they appeared to mean? But the literal interpretation of Scripture had been the ladder by which Unitarianism had reached its outlook, and had seen the Sonship of Jesus and the Unity of God. Should it now kick the ladder which had done it such good service down behind it, as if it were of no account? Literal interpretation had been the heavy ordnance with which Unitarianism had raked Orthodoxy fore and aft. Should it now be spiked or thrown overboard into the deep sea? Many there were who said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of weak minds," and resolved to give a cordial welcome to the new interpretation. But all could not do this; and, while some of those who could not clove to the ancient tale, others, finding that they must choose between the Scriptural and the rational, chose the latter, albeit sometimes with a grieved and anxious heart. Channing, hardly imagining that such a conflict ever would arise, had said that, if it should, it should be decided in this wise; and now his prophecy was a great encouragement to many to do the difficult and painful thing.

Back there a little way, when I spoke of the average testimony of the Scriptures as one canon of interpretation, I said, "I beg that you will notice this."

And why? Because it was an irrational and mistaken canon of interpretation. It assumed the unity of the Scriptures, and this assumption has no rational ground. The Bible is an aggregation of different books. It is not one book. It is a little library of Hebrew and early Christian books bound up together in one volume. Hence to interpret the lowest things in one book by the highest in another, the most doubtful things in one book by the clearest in another, was an irrational proceeding. It was perfectly legitimate *ad hominem*, so long as orthodox and Unitarians alike proceeded on the assumption that the Bible was one book and had a moral and religious unity. It helped the Unitarians to tide over many a difficult place. It saved them a hundred times from the disturbing force of something intellectually repellent or painful to their moral sense. In sober truth, it amounted to a kind of allegorizing for those who had no faith in allegorical interpretation. It gradually became discredited, and with certain resulting consequences of first-rate importance. Consider how it was discredited. It was by the operation of the two characteristic Unitarian tendencies, the Scriptural and the rational. This is one of the most interesting things in the history of our Unitarian development. Just see if it is not. Unitarians have latterly been in the forefront of radical opinion concerning the Bible. And why? Because their devotion to the Bible, their allegiance to it, their reliance on its authority, made them its students to a remarkable degree; and, *searching it to find out what it taught, they found out what it was.*

Using their rational faculties to discover its meanings, they discovered the diversity of its parts, the anonymous character of many, the pseudonymous character of many more, the fragmentary character of many books, the discrepancies of parts and wholes, the inferior quality of certain histories to certain others, the composite character of the Pentateuch, the late origin of the 'Psalms,' in the New Testament the late origin of the Fourth Gospel and many of the Epistles. Strange it may be, and passing strange, but it is the plainest truth of history that Unitarian radicalism in the treatment and conception of the Bible is the direct result of Unitarian devotion to the Bible as "the only rule of faith and practice." The Unitarian searched the Scriptures, for he thought he had in them eternal life. The rationality he brought to their interpretation could not stop with this. It must go on to "the higher criticism," the study of dates and authorship, and the relation of separate books to certain historical sequences and certain tendencies of thought. Hence came the modern view. The devout searching would not alone have produced it. The rational temper would not alone have produced it. But, when these twain became one flesh, there was born to them at length the Higher Criticism, the scientific understanding of the Bible, as to Faust and Helen, in Goethe's splendid allegory, was born the child Euphorion.

The history of Biblical criticism discloses at every stage of its advance the bias of inherited belief. The devout Christian scholar almost invariably ap-

proaches the New Testament more timidly and reservedly than the Old. The devout Hebrew scholar approaches the Old Testament more timidly and reservedly than the New. My friend Rabbi Gottheil cordially accepts the most fearless and least compromising criticism of the Old Testament; but, when he comes to the New, not even the radicalism of F. C. Baur is radical enough for him. That leaves to Paul four genuine Epistles; but Rabbi Gottheil would deny him even these, while reverently according to the praise of charity in 1 Cor. xv. the highest place of honor in the religious literature of mankind. Mr. Gore, the writer on inspiration in the book called 'Lux Mundi,'—a light under a bushel,—goes quite as far as any of our modern critics in his uncompromising criticism of the Old Testament; but, coming to the New, he says, "The reason is of course obvious enough why what can be admitted [of mistake and contradiction] in the Old Testament could not without results disastrous to the Christian creed be admitted in the New." It is not often that the case is put so frankly and so baldly as it is here. It is not often that the fortunes of the Christian creed are made so consciously and openly a check upon the scholar's critical results, but all the way along they have been an unconscious check and bias upon these results. Even among Unitarians the truth of this statement is made evident by the way in which New Testament criticism has always lagged behind that of the Old. There never was a more honest critic than my Cambridge teacher, Dr. George R. Noyes;

never one less capable of consciously accepting such a limitation as that frankly accepted by Principal Gore. And yet, as I remember him, his criticism of the New Testament as compared with his criticism of the Old was more or less compromising and apologetic, though it was always going on to braver and to better things. He could not approach the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel as courageously as he approached the authenticity of 'Daniel.' The same amount of evidence that convinced him of the falsification of history in the Old Testament 'Chronicles' could not convince him of this in the New Testament 'Acts.' What we shall expect therefore in our Unitarian history, as elsewhere, is that Old Testament and New Testament criticism will not advance with equal steps. That of the New will always lag behind. It has done so, in fact.

In July, 1834, Dr. Noyes, then a parish minister in the lovely town of Petersham, Mass., printed an article on the prophets and prophecies of the Old Testament which was a radical departure from the traditional opinion in regard to them. This found in the fulfilment of prophecy an evidence of the supernatural character of Jesus and his mission second only to the evidence of the New Testament miracles, if to that. Dr. Noyes announced, "It is difficult to point out any predictions which have been fulfilled in Jesus." Here was an indirect impeachment of the New Testament also; for over and over again in that, dozens of times, this or that Old Testament passage is set forth as a prophecy of some circumstance of the life of Jesus. Prophecy

there is none, but only some word or phrase caught up by the New Testament writer, and applied, often inaptly, to this or that event, just as we more or less aptly apply the language of Shakspere to circumstances of the current time, except that we do not imagine that we are dealing with a prophecy on the one hand and with its fulfilment on the other. The Hon. James T. Austin, attorney-general of the State of Massachusetts, made a furious attack on Dr. Noyes, and demanded his public prosecution for blasphemy, instituting proceedings to that end, which were untimely nipped. There were Unitarians who were greatly shocked by Dr. Noyes's article, but not long afterwards he was made Professor of Old Testament Criticism in the Harvard Divinity School; and the sobriety of his judgment, together with his undoubted learning, did much to recommend his teachings even to those who were not naturally inclined to them.

These teachings were confirmed and carried further by De Wette's 'Introduction to the Old Testament,' to the translation of which Theodore Parker gave the strength of his young manhood while he was preaching at West Roxbury. They were no weak beginnings of the things since come to life. With many lesser things they involved the documentary character of the Pentateuch; the late origin of 'Deuteronomy'—about 620 B.C.; the late origin of 'Daniel'—about 160 B.C. instead of 538, as the book itself gives out; the division of Isaiah into two great fragments, two hundred years apart; the substitution of moral warning and rebuke for supernatural predic-

tion as the real function of the prophets; the deduction of many Psalms from the seventy-three ascribed to David in the traditional titles; and from Solomon of the most of what has been ascribed to him, all of 'Ecclesiastes' and 'The Song of Songs'; the late origin of 'Chronicles' and their deliberate falsification of the history contained in 'Samuel' and 'Kings' in the interest of the priestly party and the priestly legislation.

The name of German Old Testament critics has been legion; but between De Wette and Wellhausen the most celebrated and most influential was certainly Ewald. More speculative than De Wette, and of temper far less conciliatory, his learning was immense; and he did much to confirm De Wette's results, much also to modify them or carry them further. Our Unitarian scholar, Dr. Joseph Henry Allen, was as complete a master of his voluminous productivity in this country as Dean Stanley was abroad, and familiarized his results among us in his 'Hebrew Men and Times,' which, if it is a less brilliant book than Stanley's 'Jewish Church,' is less vitiated by a passion for the picturesque,— in Stanley's book so often fatal to historic truth. We had come so far a little less than twenty years ago, when the criticism of Dr. Abraham Kuenen, of Leiden, which has since been confirmed by that of Wellhausen and Reuss and Robertson Smith and Toy and Cheyne and Driver, and the great body of qualified authorities, without regard to their sectarian connection, first found its way to this country. The Rev. Samuel R. Calthrop at once became its eloquent champion.

My own lectures,* embodying Kuenen's generalization, were delivered in the winter of 1877–78; and I have always allowed myself to glory just a little that I consulted with none of the apostles at Jerusalem or elsewhere before abandoning myself with enthusiasm and delight to the stress of his great argument. I must confess, however, that it won an easy victory. There was some doughty opposition, but it could not withstand the rising flood of frank assent and cordial sympathy. The shepherds hailed the happy birth before the wise men hereabout; but these soon arrived to add their acclamation,— notably one from the South, where he had been a professor in some Baptist Theological School, Professor Crawford H. Toy, now of the Cambridge Theological School, a scholar equal to the best in our own country or in any other. After a few years the Rev. Edward H. Hall, of Cambridge, one of our strongest men upon the critical side as upon every other, read a paper at our national Conference, embodying the new criticism; and some one said the only trouble about it was that everybody believed it, so quickly had the reasonableness and efficacy of the new criticism prevailed.

And now, very briefly, as to what this criticism of Kuenen actually was and is. It was that, beginning our studies with those parts of the Old Testament of whose origin we are most certain,— the prophetic writings,— and working our way out from these, we find that for the present order of the Old Testament — Law, Psalms, Prophets — we must have Prophets,

* 'The Bible of To-day.'

Psalms, Law, and then more Psalms up almost to the threshold of the Christian era. It was a very radical departure when De Wette assigned 'Deuteronomy' to 620 B.C., seven hundred years after the time of Moses. For a long time after that 'Deuteronomy' was supposed to be the latest portion of the Pentateuch, and the rest much older. But, according to Kuenen,— and the whole world of scholarship is with him now,— the priestly, the Levitical portions of the Pentateuch are much later than 'Deuteronomy.' They were projected in the sixth and published in the fifth century B.C. And the best thing about this criticism is that it has immense constructive energy. Up to this point disintegration had been steadily going on, and confusion was getting worse confounded all the time. The Old Testament was getting to be more and more like a dear old misshapen building, with some hacking away at it to build their petty theories, and some trying to restore it, with much the same result as where they tried to restore Chichester cathedral, and the whole spire and tower came down upon the run. The criticism of Kuenen left hardly one stone upon another; but for the ancient ruin it gave us a logical construction, for a heap of stones a building splendid and symmetrical in every part. For a unity merely arbitrary and mechanical it gave us a unity that was vital and organic. It related every part of the Hexateuch, the Six Books,— for 'Joshua' is one of the same company with the other five, the Pentateuch,— to some stage of Israel's growth in spiritual things. Everything falls into line,— the Ten Com-

mandments, the Book of Covenants (Ex. xxi., xxiii., 19), then the Prophetic narratives, which are the story-book which has "kept children from their play and old men from the chimney-corner," from that to the Elohistic document, to the fusion of this with the former, to 'Deuteronomy' and a Deuteronomic revision, and finally to the Priest's Code, and the grand fusion of this with the rest, and the revision of the whole that brought the Six Books into their present shape from three to four hundred years B.C., about one thousand years after the time of Moses, who is still celebrated in the International Sunday School Papers and some other pious frauds as the author of the Pentateuch.

And, mind you, the constructive achievements of the Kuenen criticism do not end with the rearrangement of the Six Books in the manner indicated. The order thus discovered is an order like that of a great army which, as it goes marching on, sweeps up into its files the wavering swarms of national allies and border states, and makes them energetic and consenting parts of its own conquering might. The rearrangement of the Hexateuch furnishes a unifying principle of Old Testament relations. Each other part, in turn, the Histories, the Prophecies, the Psalms, allies itself with one part or another of the Hexateuch's composite unity, and gives it ampler illustration. Immeasurable the gain of every part in interest, in vitality, in historical and spiritual significance, because of this living spirit of evolution in the midst of the revolving wheels of various motive, passion, ardor, exaltation. Nor less the gain

to Hebrew literature than to the Hebrew history and Hebrew life, of which the literature is our report. Henceforth we have a history of religious growth where before we had one of decadence. And, seeing that the 'Psalms' were few, if any of them, written until after the exile, five hundred years after the time of David, they were evidently the product of the priestly mind and heart; and we cannot hereafter admire the prophets so exclusively and depreciate the priests so sternly as we have done heretofore.

However disastrous such a principle to the Christian creed, the Higher Criticism has but one method for the Old Testament and New. If this has not yet been worked so thoroughly with the latter as with the former, it will be at no distant day. It is an interesting fact that Andrews Norton who, in 1839, attacked Emerson's Divinity School address as "the latest form of infidelity," was one of the first to make a serious breach in the New Testament wall: this by his insistence on the legendary character of the opening chapters of 'Matthew' and 'Luke.' German criticism helped us with the New Testament as it had done with the Old. If Strauss's 'Life of Jesus,' which appeared in 1835, and which George Eliot's translation domesticated in England and America in 1846, did not persuade many to adopt "the mythical theory" in all its rigor, it did much to pulverize not only the supernaturalist, but also the rationalistic interpretation of the miracles. (By the rationalistic interpretation I mean that of Paulus, which endeavored to show that every miraculous

narration was the distortion of some actual occurrence.) Then came the criticism of Ferdinand Christian Baur, which the Rev. O. B. Frothingham commended to the young men of thirty years ago with a pen touched with persuasion. This was the *tendency* criticism, so called because it made the tendency of the different books of the New Testament with reference to Pauline breadth and Petrine narrowness a test of literary motive, of date, of authenticity, and so forth. It seems almost impossible that Kuenen, in pushing out from the *terra firma* of the prophets into the unknown sea, had not in mind the method of Baur in pushing out from the four undoubted Epistles of Saint Paul into the darkness round about. He held them as a lamp close to his breast, confident that their splendor soon or late would dissipate the gloom. He may have overworked his theory, but it was fruitful of magnificent results. It has marshalled the New Testament books "the way that they should go" almost as effectively as Kuenen's principle has marshalled those of the Old Testament. Meantime, as there the authorship and date of the Pentateuch have been central to the interest of the whole study, so here have been the authorship and date of the Fourth Gospel. The conclusion which is now generally agreed upon is that the Gospel was written in the second quarter of the second century; that its long discourses are furthest removed from the historic truth; that, nevertheless, there are elements of a genuine tradition both of phrase and fact which may have derived its original impulse from the apostle John. As for the other Gospels, it is

now generally agreed that 'Mark' is the earliest, that 'Matthew' came next, and then 'Luke'; that they all abound in legendary and contradictory elements, and are the outcome of a time long subsequent to the death of Jesus, at the shortest about fifty years. To Baur's list of Paul's genuine Epistles,—'Romans,' '1 and 2 Corinthians,' and 'Galatians,'—two or three others have been added with some confidence. None of the other Epistles* are now credited to the writers whose names they bear in the New Testament. 'The Revelation of Saint John the Divine,' as it is called, appears to be a Jewish Apocalypse made over by some Christian editor to suit his taste and purpose. Hence the curses he denounces on those who take anything from the book or add anything to it. To have another steal our stolen goods from us is always a peculiarly distressful circumstance. But the writer need not have been so sensitive. He had only done what had been done a hundred times by others from 'Genesis' to 'Revelation.' His method was simply that in obedience to which the whole structure of the Bible "rose like Ilion in a mist of towers."

Have you kept the thread throughout this labyrinth, or has it broken in your hands? Have you thought out for yourselves as I have gone along the general conclusion so that there is no need for me to put it into words? It is that Unitarianism, beginning with an intense loyalty and devotion to the letter of the Scriptures, and making that, not the Roman Catholic's tradition, nor the Evangelical

* Except possibly 'James.' But which James?

Protestant's creed, his standard of belief, yet seeking by a rational process to discover what meaning and what help the letter actually held, has come at length to hold a doctrine of the Bible radically different from its original doctrine, which was that it was a supernatural and infallible revelation. This was inevitable; for the textual criticism could not but widen out into questions of date and authorship and the purpose of the various books. Astronomy and geology and anthropology could not withhold their comments on the cosmology of 'Genesis' and related things. The studies of Niebuhr and other critical historians could not be kept out of the equation, with their general distrust of the validity of ancient histories. The study of comparative religion pressed its question why the opinion of Jews and Christians should be considered as an argument for the inspiration of their sacred books more than the opinion of Mohammedans and Brahmans and Buddhists in regard to theirs. Moreover, it appears that the writers of the Bible did not suspect that they were writing inspired documents. Could the various editors who added here, subtracted there, who cast and recast their material, have imagined that they were handling the word of God? "It is not possible," says Renan, "to hack about so freely a text admitted to be inspired." The theories of inspiration and infallibility are found to have grown up in obedience to theological necessities, to have come from men whose *ipse dixit* counts for less than that of any modern scholar. All these things have had weight, enough to make the theory of Biblical infallibility or

supernatural inspiration kick the beam. Hundreds of mistakes and contradictions have been brought to light. Hardly a book in the Bible now retains its former temporal relation to the general history or to other books. Some are pseudonymous. Many others are anonymous, by far the greater number of them all. It is worse than a blunder, it is a crime for any person decently intelligent and tolerably informed to claim for a collection of books having these characteristics and this history a general or particular infallibility, a supernatural character, or an authority in any part over and above the natural appeal it makes to conscience, mind, and heart.

And still, "though much is taken, much abides," for those who are capable of serious study: a splendid process of religious evolution sweeping through a thousand years of busy, checkered time. Never at any time before was the study of the Bible so rich and so rewarding as it is now, and never before was it pursued among us with such enthusiasm and such large results. There is more fun in it, if our young people did but know it, than in their social gayety or scientific whist. Those are mistaken who imagine that this study is for scholars only. The scholars have made the way so plain that he who runs may read, and a wayfaring man, though not a scholar, may not err therein.

There is much no doubt in the combined result of modern scholarship which cannot be readily taken up into the consciousness of the average man of business, the average woman cumbered with much domestic serving and with many social cares. The

Bible as it is generally printed, so miserably dislocated and deranged, is almost fatal to a vivid realization of the positive results of critical investigation. And what remains for those for whom such vivid realization is difficult or impossible? Surely much, which, however it may be enhanced by a liberal appreciation of the critical results, does not depend on these so absolutely that without them it cannot enter with a wonderful delight and satisfaction into the Bible's treasury of precious things; into its thoughts that breathe and words that burn; into the quaint and beautiful old stories of the morning world; into the splendid indignation of the prophecies and the gladness or humiliation of the Psalms; into the moral and spiritual glory of the Epistles which breaks through the dark and tortuous theology of Paul like sunshine through the clouds; into the parables and beatitudes of Jesus; and, best of all, into the vision of his personality, so radiant that it cannot be obscured entirely by any conscious or unconscious artifice of an inapprehensive, superstitious time, past, present, or to come. If here is less than the old doctrine seemed to give, it is no meagre benefaction. It can be indefinitely extended by an indefinite appropriation of the results of critical inquiry, which, fatal to the imagination of a supernatural revelation, and to each and every dogma which has this for its foundation, leaves every true word as true as ever, every good thing as good, and opens wide the doors for inspirations and for revelations broad as humanity, nor than the universe and God less deep and high.

V.

CHRISTIANITY.

"WIDE is the range of words," sang Homer long ago; and it is wider now than it was then, for words are always taking on new meanings with the lapse of time. And so it happens that Christianity is a word of many meanings; and it is necessary before I set out to say what Unitarianism, old and new, has thought of Christianity that I should indicate which of its many meanings I have specially in mind: the religion of Christendom, the most general meaning; or the Roman Catholic religion, to which Roman Catholics confine it; or the evangelical theology of the Protestant orthodox sects; or the religious system whose initial stages, as reported in the New Testament, were bound up with the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who, ultimately, if not originally, was called "the Christ." Here are four different meanings,— others might easily be named, —and the last of these is the one which I have specially in mind to-day. But even here we are not dealing with a fixed quantity, with a Christianity "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Even within the limits of the New Testament we have a development. Even there Christianity is one thing in the Synoptic Gospels, and another thing in Paul's Epis-

tles, and still another thing in the Fourth Gospel, which is a splendid intimation of the course it was to take for the two following centuries, from the time of Hadrian to that of Constantine and the Nicene Creed. During these centuries the Jewish stock was planted in Greek soil, nourished by Greek hands, subjected to Greek influences, grafted with Greek ideas; and it became far more a Greek than Jewish thing, and bore Greek fruit abundantly, and Jewish very sparingly. But the end was not yet. Christianity as a development of religious thought and life came in contact, not only with Greek philosophy which transformed it from an ethical into a theological system, without a syllable of ethics in its creed; it also came in contact with the Roman Empire, with its religious customs, government, and laws; and all these made their mark upon the plastic substance of the new religion. The emperor became the pope, keeping the imperial title, pontifex maximus, the chief bridge-builder, which the emperor had inherited from a time when the principal function of the early king or consul had been the superintendence of the bridges under which the Tiber tossed its tawny mane. The transformation of Christianity by Roman custom, government, and law was not less important than its transformation by the Greek rhetoric and mysteries and philosophy. It was a transformation without end. In the eighth century it made transubstantiation, the notion that the eucharistic bread and wine are actually the flesh and blood of Christ, a dogma of the Church. In the eleventh century it radically transformed the doctrine

of the atonement. In our own time, full as this is of the pride of science, it has brought to birth two of the most misshapen dogmas that it ever has conceived: in 1854, the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, which means that she was herself conceived without original sin; and, in 1870, the infallibility of the pope.

Thus you will see that, whatever origin and character we may assign to Christianity as it appears in the New Testament, we do not necessarily assign the same origin and character to the Christianity of the Nicene Creed or the much later Athanasian, or to the Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church in the eighth century or the eleventh or the nineteenth, or to the Christianity of Calvin and the Westminster divines. But here are distinctions which are continually forgotten. Men argue this way and that for the Christianity of the New Testament, as if they were arguing for the doctrine and observance of their particular church. It is like arguing for a tariff bill as finally voted on, torn and rent and patched and plastered by a pack of local interests and political rivalries and hatreds and ambitions, as if it were the bill originally conceived.* Every scholar, every casual student of theology and ecclesiastical history, knows that this is so; but the Protestant who is still orthodox is much slower to admit the fact than the Roman Catholic. Why? Because the Protestant's standard of authority is the Bible; and the Roman Catholic has a double standard,— the Bible and tradition. Time was when the

* February, 1894.

Roman Catholics limited the extent of tradition to the Patristic age, the time before "the Fathers fell asleep." To Newman and his set while they were still Anglicans the fourth century was their main haunt, more sacred in their eyes than the century of Jesus and the apostles. But to stop there would leave many a Roman doctrine out in a most freezing cold. So Newman for a bridge by which to pass from the church of Henry VIII. to that of Alexander VI.— *Arcades ambo* — constructed his 'Development of Christian Doctrine,' allowing to that development indefinite continuance, but at the same time devising a system of tests by which genuine development could be distinguished from corruption of the faith delivered to the saints. I need hardly add that these tests were so devised as to establish the validity of the Roman doctrine and observance as, beyond peradventure, sound and good. And I need not say that for logical coherency the Roman Catholic system is infinitely superior to the Calvinistic. The development of Christian doctrine is as obvious as the decay of feudalism and the growth of nationality from that decay. But, while the Roman has his popes and councils to declare the quality of this development and separate the true and false, the Protestant has only his "unassisted reason," in practice just as good as popes and councils, the same thing in fact, but theoretically, for those who want a supernatural and authoritative system of religion, a very different and far less imposing matter.

In considering the Bible, in my last lecture, you will remember that we found that the first Christian

Unitarians — that is to say, Jesus and his earlier disciples — had no such Bible as we have to think about one way or the other. It was smaller than our Bible by the New Testament, to say nothing of the Apocrypha. It was the Old Testament with two or three books, now well inside, awaiting the decision of their claims. And, in like manner, the first Unitarian Christians, Jesus and his disciples, had no such Christianity as we have to think about one way or the other. For all that the Greek mysteries and rhetoric and philosophy, and all that the Roman custom, government, and law, contributed, was far below the horizon of an earthly future of which the earliest Christians had no expectation whatsoever. For what they thought of Christianity, as yet not named, we must go to the first three Gospels, taking care to set aside what was evidently the afterthought of a later time. We cannot go to Paul's Epistles, the most authentic documents of the New Testament and those nearest to the time of Jesus, because they were a speculative transformation of the life and death of Jesus, and were rejected as heretical by James, the brother of Jesus, and the whole apostolic party. But, for the tenderness of a second-century heretic for those Epistles, they might never have come down to us at all. We cannot go to the Fourth Gospel; for that would have no general recognition for a long time yet, no existence until Jesus had been well-nigh or quite a century dead. But the first three Gospels were written between 70 and 115 A.D., and the substance of them had been treasured in men's memories and on scraps of parch-

ment for some time before the former of these dates. In this pre-existent stage they lacked some important features of their presentment as we have it now. They lacked the miraculous birth of Jesus, and they lacked his resurrection from the dead. 'Mark,' the earliest of the three, never received the former of these significant additions, and the latter only at a wide remove from the original form.

Bearing in mind these things, let us inquire what was the doctrine of the early Unitarians concerning Christianity. What answer do we get? This, and this only: that they had no doctrine about it; that they had never heard the name, and had no idea of the thing,— that is, a new religion separating itself from Judaism. The religion of Jesus was to them, as to Jesus himself, the culmination of Judaism, its natural flower and fruit. Jesus was to them, as to himself, the Jewish Messiah, who had been prophecied for generations and expected long, the conception varying with times and individuals, in the mind and heart of Jesus taking on a lofty ideality to which his disciples could not attain. He died a cruel death, and straightway they began to look for his return. It was very hard for them to give up the hope of this. In the 'Second Epistle of Peter,' a late document of the second century, we have a wail of disappointment that, "since the fathers fell asleep, all things remain as they were from the beginning." Gradually they settled down to the millennial doctrine, that he would come again after a thousand years.

Jesus and his earliest disciples were Jews, and

limited to Judaism the horizon of their hopes. But Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles; and his doctrine was that the life and death of Jesus meant a new religion. In cursing Jesus,— "Cursed be he that hangs on a tree," — the law had cursed itself. In destroying him, it had destroyed itself; for his resurrection had established his Messianic right and title. By his death and resurrection the law had been abolished; and the Christians — for they had now begun to be so called — need not observe its provisions, in order to be as good as Jews in the new order. To this rendering there was great opposition, of which the traces in the New Testament are not few. 'Luke' and the 'Acts of the Apostles' are books which try to reconcile the difference. They Paulinize Peter, and Petrinize Paul. They rob Paul of his glory as the first apostle to the Gentiles, and set it upon Peter's head. It was a daring compromise, but it met with a remarkable success. The genial falsification was accepted as the truth of history from the second century till the nineteenth. But the Jewish Christians were not taken in its snare. After a little while their numbers steadily decreased; and in a few centuries Christianity lost all attraction for the people in whose womb it had been fashioned, and to which it has always been indebted for its most precious things.

So long as there were any Unitarians in the early church,— and this was for some centuries after the adoption of the Nicene Creed,— their general view of Christianity was substantially the same as that of the Trinitarians. (Let me say here that these desig-

nations were not in use, nor any Greek or Latin designations corresponding to them, in the early church. Servetus was the first to speak of Trinitarians, Calvin resenting nothing else more fiercely; and we do not encounter the word "Unitarian" until after the death of Servetus.) But the general view was undergoing constant change. There was a perfect Babel of beliefs in the second and third centuries, and it is only the conceit of modern dogmatism that can distinguish the channel of an orthodox opinion in the wild waste of controversy that was raging far and wide. There were those — the Gnostics — who opposed Christianity to Judaism outright, and there were those who regarded it as the extension of Judaism to meet the requirements of a universal faith. The latter view prevailed, even as it did so taking up into itself much from the conflicting tendencies. The Catholic Church emerged from out the chaos, an amalgamation of the most diverse elements. Jesus, the Messiah of the Jewish nation, became the pre-existent Son of God, and, at last, God himself, not merely as a manifestation (the Sabellian view), but as a being equally eternal with the Father, and of one substance with him. For a long time we see two conceptions of Christianity contending with each other,—one that it was a system of revelation, the other that it was a system of redemption. Often the two changed swords; but the latter won the final victory, and then went on to make the redemptive sacrifice of Christ an ever-present fact in the mystery of the eucharistic bread and wine,— the Roman Catholic mass.

It would be interesting,—to me, at any rate,—if I had the time, to trace the re-emergence of the Unitarian doctrine of the uni-personality of God, and discover, if I could, what views of Christianity were associated with it from one stage to another. (Here let me again remind you that no Trinitarians mean to be tri-theistic, though practically they have been so oftener than not. They do not mean to deny the unity of God's being, but only the unity of his personality. They would all say that he is One, but One in three persons.) The Reformation meant much more than Luther's thought and action, even when these had drawn in the thought and action of John Calvin to enlarge their scope. There was a ferment of ideas, and in this ferment there were many tendencies to a Unitarian point of view. Popular history and tradition are always unjust. They select a few distinguished names, and banish to oblivion many not less deserving of our reverence. For the beginnings of modern Unitarianism they have selected the names of Servetus and the Socini, and these could not be more honorable; but there were others who should not be forgotten, least of all Bernardino Ochino, to whom the Socini and early English Unitarianism owed a mighty debt. At some important points these men were quite as definitely opposed to Calvin as to the Church of Rome, and these were points touching the general view of Christianity. Servetus and the Socini were not of one mind in their Christology. No one of them was an Arian; but, while Servetus was a Sabellian, or the next of kin, holding that the Son and Holy Spirit

were manifestations of the Father, the Socini were humanitarians, Jesus was for them "a pure man," on whom the Father conferred an official dignity equal to his own. But, however they might differ in their difference from Arius or the Trinitarian dogma, they were agreed in their conception of Christianity as God's purpose and endeavor, through Christ, to reconcile mankind to himself. And, however it may have been with Servetus, this was the doctrine of Faustus Socinus, the nephew of Lælius, on which he laid the greatest stress and by which he set the greatest store. It was in direct opposition to the teaching of Calvin,—that the object of Christ's mission was to reconcile an offended God to men. So it was that Socinus reverted to the conception of Christianity as a system of revelation rather than a system of redemption. The reconciliation of man to God was to be effected by the teaching and example of Jesus, infallibly reported in the New Testament, a book depending for its authority on its rational consistency and its appeal to men's rationality. There was no religion without revelation. The New Testament was the standard, approved by signs and wonders, fortified by its realization of the predictions of Old Testament prophecy. The death of Jesus ceased to be the centre of theology. His life was the important matter; that and his resurrection as a proof of immortality, of which there was no other evidence.

Here was a system very simple and coherent, if not too closely questioned, which commended itself to many noble spirits, and which in Poland and Tran-

sylvania became the constructive principle of a church that had no meagre history, with its own calendar of saints and its own martyr-roll.

The conception of Christianity adopted by the early English Unitarians was generally Socinian. It was not essential to this conception that the Socinian conception of Jesus as "a pure man," miraculously born, endowed, and raised up from the dead, should be adopted. There were Arians not a few holding that Jesus was a super-angelic being, among these Milton and Locke and Newton; but Arians and humanitarian Socinians held to much the same conception of Christianity as a system of faith and piety established as supernatural by miracles and the fulfilment of prophecy, the Bible being a miraculously inspired account of the life and death of Jesus and the preparation for his coming from the beginning of the world. The variations from this doctrine in the direction of a greater liberalism were much more common in England than in America, where generally the tone was more conservative, the Christology Arian rather than Socinian. But this did not prevent the common representation of Jesus from being that of a great teacher, furnishing a great example. "Respect the gods," Confucius said, "and keep them at a distance"; and the Unitarians of Channing's time and school acted upon this hint with their Arian conception of Jesus. "The Imitableness of Christ's Character" was one of Channing's most prolific and inspiring themes. As time went on, the Arian view held the allegiance of an ever smaller company; but simultaneously with its

decline there grew up a new humanitarian doctrine, much more thoroughgoing and consistent than the Socinian, and Theodore Parker was its prophet.

The Unitarian controversy, as we call it,— the controversy, or rather separation, of anti-Trinitarians and Trinitarians, which began in the New England Congregational churches in 1815 after half a century, or more, of quiet preparation,— ended in 1830. In one sense, it has not ended yet; but by 1830 the Unitarians had separated themselves or been separated from their brethren, and set up a denomination of their own. Up to this time they had been as firm as the most orthodox in their conviction that Christianity is a supernatural religion. They had been thus minded from the start. Luther and Calvin did not accept more unequivocally the Reformation principle of the supreme authority of the Bible. But from the start the Unitarians had a principle of interpretation which, if faithfully adhered to, was certain, soon or late, to entail important consequences, and to bring the supernatural character of the Bible and of Christianity level with the ground. For it was a principle of rational investigation. The Roman Catholics said that the Church was the interpreter of Scripture; Luther and Calvin, that it was to be interpreted by the concurrent testimony of the Holy Spirit and the believer's mind, whatever that might mean. In practice it soon meant the Institutes of Calvin and the Augsburg Confession overriding private judgment. But the Socinian principle of rational investigation declared upon the house-tops what Luther had but whispered in the ear. "Prot-

estantism," says Dr. Holmes, "means 'Mind your own business,' but it is afraid of its own logic." Socinus was not. And that he was not bespeaks a noble confidence in the Unitarian teaching of the New Testament. But what a difference, immeasurable, unspeakable, between the New Testament as it was in his naïve conception and the New Testament of our modern critics! For him its twenty-seven books were all the writings of the men to whom they were assigned. Six or seven only have that character for us. For him none of them had been corrupted. For us the most of them have been — well, not perhaps corrupted, but written pseudonymously or made over for dogmatic ends. For him the apostles were men who had abundant opportunity to become acquainted with the facts of Jesus' life. Yes; but the original apostles wrote no book that has come down to us. He found them in everything essential agreeing with each other. We find a radical discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the other three, between the 'Acts of the Apostles' and the genuine Epistles of Saint Paul. We cannot doubt the absolute sincerity of Socinus; but we stand amazed at his opinion that, if the whole New Testament had been written by one man, it could not have been more self-consistent and coherent than it actually is.

But that gulf which now divides his happy confidence from the results of modern scholarship was mercifully hidden from his view. Like a great chasm in the earth, it has been made and widened little by little by the action of forces quiet as the

frost and rain. All through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we find Unitarian scholars repeating the arguments of Socinus, and many of their orthodox neighbors borrowing them to use against the Deist and the infidel. And, since Unitarians have had no further use for them, they — the orthodox — have often used them against these, as if they — the Unitarians — did not know exactly how much they are worth. There is no better statement of the argument for Christianity as a supernatural revelation than Dr. Channing's 'Evidences of Christianity,' and it agrees substantially with the argument of Socinus. He is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," because it makes a reasonable appeal to his intelligence. It is reasonable to expect a revelation, and Christianity comes to us accredited as one by unmistakable signs and wonders. "We have," he says, "abundant means of access to its earlier stages." "No age of antiquity is so thoroughly understood" as that in which Christianity arose. It is true that for Socinus there was not a doubt that 'Matthew,' 'Mark,' 'Luke,' and 'John' were written by the men whose names they bear, not a doubt to meet and throw. For Channing there were many doubts to meet, but none that left a shade of doubt on his own mind. He found no traces in them of a later time than that of the apostles. But the Gospels, thus timely and authentic, attest a revelation miraculous through all its course, the miraculous birth of Jesus and his resurrection significantly beginning and concluding the impressive history. The miracles of the New Testament were distinguished from

other miracles by certain tests which did no discredit to Channing's intellectual ability, and still less to his moral sense. He found a presumption in their favor as the sanctions of a needed revelation. He found them associated with a doctrine so noble and engaging that they could not be confounded with the pretended miracles that had no moral purpose and no lofty doctrinal associations. Here he was getting dangerously near the saying of John Locke, that we accept the miracles on account of the doctrine, and not the doctrine on account of the miracles. Moreover, he was arguing in a circle, first using the doctrine to accredit the miracles, and then the miracles to accredit the doctrine as a thing of God. It is a delightful thing to read the argument of Channing, to put yourself in his place, or the place of a sympathetic hearer, and let yourself be carried along on the swift gliding stream of his discourse. But at the end you waken with a start to find how pitilessly his dome of many-colored glass has been shattered to fragments by the scientific criticism of a later and the present time.

Cardinal Manning said that to seek reasons for our faith is to take the high road to infidelity. There never was a truer word, if by "infidelity" we understand the rejection of Christianity as a supernatural revelation. Reason as the interpreter of revelation and the ground of revelation, as it was from Socinus to Channing, tended with an irresistible momentum to become reason as the judge of revelation, its general character and its particular contents. In some of Channing's writings we find this process

well advanced. We find him insisting that "nothing but the approving sentence of reason binds us to receive and to obey" the supernatural revelation. We find him saying that "he is surer that his rational nature is from God than that any book is the expression of his will," and that, in case of any conflict between his reason and the word of revelation, he must take reason for his guide. But there was a certain operation of the rational temper of the Unitarians that for a long time broke the force of their rational principle, and delayed the advent of its consistent application. It was that rationalism which consists in rationalizing those elements in the Bible which appear to be irrational, in explaining away their irrational appearance. The ingenuity exhibited in doing this was often marvellous. When there was talk of Garibaldi's marrying an English wife, and it was asked, "How about the one in Italy?" it was said, "Gladstone can explain her away." There were many Gladstones of this sort among the Unitarians before the time of Parker, — men able to explain away texts and obvious meanings as truly inexpugnable as an Italian wife. The more miracles, the better, ought to have been the supernaturalist's rule. But we find the English Unitarians before Channing and the American Unitarians before Parker minimizing the miracles, getting rid of as many as possible in a quiet, unobtrusive way, reminding us of the lover who wrote upon the window-pane,—

"My wound is great because it is so small,"

to which another added logically,—

"Then it were greater, were there none at all."

The rational temper had another operation that delayed the inevitable day of reckoning. I can best indicate it in the words of Channing: "Let me go to the Bible," he said, "dismissing my reason and taking the first impression which the words convey, and there is no absurdity, however gross, into which I shall not fall. . . . Nothing is plainer than that I must compare passage with passage, and limit one by another, and especially limit all by those plain and universal principles of reason which are called common sense." Here in the last clause we have the rationalizing method justified, the explaining away. Common sense is to be expected and demanded of everybody speaking and writing in the Bible. But the limitation of one passage by another, of the doubtful by the clear, of the part by the whole, was not less unscientific. It assumed the unity of the Bible, arguing from part to part, as if it were all the work of one man, the expression of one mind. But you can see plainly how, by the diligent working of this method, one generation succeeded another, and still there was no adequate appreciation of the diverse and contradictory elements in the Old Testament or New, and hence no adequate appreciation of the weakness of the general argument for Christianity as a supernatural religion.

You will think I am repeating my last lecture; but the course of Biblical studies has furnished all along the grounds of a right understanding of the

character of Christianity. As time went on, with all the ingenuity that was secretly pledged in advance to the maintenance of a foregone conclusion, there was a good deal of straightforward dealing with the Bible. The fulfilment of prophecy equally with miracles had been vaunted as a proof of the supernatural character of Christianity; but in 1834 Dr. Noyes came boldly to the front with a review of Hengstenberg, a famous German critic of the time, in which he showed conclusively that the Old Testament passages quoted as prophecies in the New Testament had no relation to the events by which they were supposed to be fulfilled. They were merely ingenious adaptations, as of the phrase in 'Hamlet,' "A tanner will last you eight years," to the second presidential term of General Grant, and few of them so apt as this. The lack of correspondence was not now noted for the first time. William Whiston (died 1752) had noticed it, and had concluded that the wicked Jews had altered the Old Testament, so that the New Testament fulfilments might be made absurd. In sorry truth, the wicked Christians did sometimes interpolate prophecies in the Old Testament, a fact to which the 'Epistle of Barnabas' bears unmistakable witness.

The argument from prophecy had few to do it reverence after Dr. Noyes's article had been duly read and inwardly digested. Andrews Norton said in 1839, "By a belief in Christianity we mean that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion, and that the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak in his name was

attested, in the only way it could be, by miraculous displays of his power." "In the only way it could be": this seems to waive the prophecies aside. But now the miracles must have their turn. When he was a young man, Dr. Noyes taught a winter school in Lexington, Mass.; and I have in my possession a manuscript letter to him by one of his pupils who lived to carry on his work. It is signed Theodore Parker. We date the Parker controversy, the subject of which was the supernatural character of Christianity, from Parker's South Boston sermon, May 19, 1841. But that sermon did not deny the supernatural origin of Christianity. It did not deny that miracles are possible, nor that they were necessary to start Christianity on its career; but it denied that they were necessary to establish, prove, or sanction Christianity for the modern mind. Channing had said as much, but he had said it incidentally and quietly. With Parker it was the business of the hour. He made his statement sharp and antithetic. Miracles were "the transient," the morality and personality of Jesus were "the permanent in Christianity." But, if he had said that miracles were impossible and had never happened, he would have fared no worse. Jesus must be believed, his character must be admired, his goodness must be loved and followed, because of his miraculous birth and resurrection, and the miracles he wrought in the brief period of his ministry. The difference between this manner of belief and Parker's was declared by Dr. Gannett, the kindest and most just of his opponents, to be "a difference between

Christianity and no Christianity." Nearly all the Unitarians thought after this fashion fifty years ago. None of them think so now; and the American Unitarian Association publishes a book in which this is not merely conceded, but published joyfully.

From denying the present usefulness of miracles Parker went on to deny their actual occurrence; and many followed him, some explaining them away into natural or possible occurrences, and some regarding them as altogether imaginary and fictitious. There was much shuffling and misunderstanding, some meaning by miracles violations of natural law, and others the special wonders of the New Testament. One thing is certain: that only miracles which are violations of natural law can establish a supernatural revelation. Miracles like Dr. Furness's,—I do not mean the wonders of his beautiful old age, but those which he has been writing about for some sixty years, —these, which are the perfection of nature, cannot establish the supernatural. Miracles, which are exhibitions of higher laws than those which we have formulated, cannot do this. For a long time a good many Unitarians did not seem to see this; and they went on imagining themselves supernaturalists when they were not. But gradually they attained to clearer vision; and, when the scientific thinking of the last thirty years succeeded to the vaguer thinking of the Transcendental period, it became evident that the laws of nature, as we call them, are only so many subjective classifications of the observed facts of nature. And the moment we come upon a fact not included in our classifications we are simply

obliged to modify our hitherto unduly narrow classifications, so that they will include the latest fact. There is more wisdom in Professor Huxley's day-fly upon this head than in all the Christian evidences that are mouldering upon dusty shelves. A "day-fly," says the professor,— that is, a fly that lives but for a day,— "has better grounds for calling a thunder-storm supernatural than has man to say that the most astonishing event he can conceive is beyond the scope of natural causes." The presumption, then, is in affirming supernatural interposition. As for the New Testament miracles, so called, as natural occurrences, the present Unitarian position is that they are to be accepted or rejected according as there is or is not sufficient evidence to support them. Where there is so much smoke, we incline to think there must have been some fire. Where most is vaunted, there we find the least of fact; and elsewhere we can often trace the growth of the legend from some natural occurrence, some parable, or phrase. Certain of no particular event, we may entertain a general belief that on certain nervous diseases, which Jesus and his contemporaries attributed to demoniacal possession, he exercised a salutary influence as normal as the reassurance which our good physicians bring to us when we are sick. To understand the conditions of belief in Jesus' time is to wonder that, from such a germ, in such a soil and air, there did not grow a more luxurious tangle of miraculous stories than we have in the New Testament, which is the product of a century of mythological exaggeration and dogmatic reinterpretation.

With the development of these conclusions in regard to the miraculous element in the New Testament, the decline of Unitarian belief in Christianity as a supernatural religion has been as inevitable as the decline of darkness with the development of the morning light. But there has been much toil of scholarship co-operant to this happy end, and preeminently that which has set forth the natural history of the New Testament, the process of its gradual agglomeration, and the manner of its ultimate arrival at a standing of authority equal to that of the Old Testament. One might, without irreverence,— nay, with the deepest reverence possible,— be bold to say that a God were imbecile who, desiring to miraculously reveal himself to men, should go about it in this fashion. A man of average ability would have done a great deal better. He would have made it clear from the start what books were comprehended within the limits of the revelation that he wished to make. He would not have dropped one in a corner here, another in a corner there, on the mere chance of some one's stumbling on them in the dark. He would not have jumbled them up with other books of similar appearance, and left men at their wits' end to discover which was the honest coin and which the counterfeit. Did I say the God were imbecile who, wishing to miraculously reveal himself in a collection of books, should go about it thus? I take it back, to say he were a mocking fiend. He could (from the standpoint of the supernaturalist) have made it all so plain that a way-faring man, though a fool, might not err therein; and,

as it is, he has involved it in obscurities and doubts that make it every day more difficult for the intelligent and sincere to accept the proffered revelation as his supernatural gift.

But our increasing knowledge of the times succeeding those of Jesus has not done more to bring the supernaturalist doctrine of Christianity into disrespect than our increasing knowledge of the times immediately preceding his too brief career. Channing maintained with absolute sincerity that "Christianity was not the growth of any of the circumstances, principles, or feelings of the age in which it appeared," that "one of the great distinctions of the gospel is that it did not *grow*. . . . We detect no signs of it," he says, "and no efforts to realize it before the time of Jesus." It would be hard to find in all the history of thought anything less true to our present knowledge and belief than these expressions. It is true that our general belief in evolution has begotten us to a lively faith in the development of Christianity from preceding elements of belief and life; but, as the philosopher said, "If there were no God, we should have to invent one," so he might say, "If we had no general theory of evolution, we should have to invent one to formulate the results of studious investigation into the relations of Jesus and his thought to the immediately preceding and remoter times." To-day we have no greater Unitarian scholar than Professor Toy, who was but yesterday a member of the Baptist Church in good and regular standing; and we have his declaration that Jesus taught no new doctrine, and that "there was

no reason why his followers should not remain Jews in their religious belief." The spring does not foretell the summer with a clearer prophecy than that foretelling Jesus and his religion in the period corresponding to the gap between the Old Testament and New,— a period represented in our Bibles heretofore by two or three blank leaves for the inscription of our family births, deaths, and marriages. He took up into himself not only the passion of the Prophets and the holy beauty of the Psalms, but the ethical nobility of the rabbis, and the mysterious hopes and aspirations that were filling the bosom of Judea with a profound and tragical unrest. Spiritual genius, like intellectual, is often a high priest after the manner of Melchizedek, without father, without mother; but, if this phenomenon demanded a supernaturalist explanation, Shakspere and Lincoln would demand it just as much as Joseph's peasant son.

Another body of opinion which in Channing's time was without form or comeliness, and was given over to the eager care of those called infidels, has since grown strong and fair, and has acquired an honorable name,— The Science of Comparative Religion. For Socinus there was no religion outside of Christianity. Channing's position was very different from that. He taught at last that Christ's character was "excellent and glorious rather for what it had in common with other good beings" than for what it had in singularity. But it is never safe to go to Dr. Channing for the average Unitarian opinion of his time: he was always in advance

of that. Dr. Gannett heard the sermon from which I have quoted, and went home, and wrote it down in his journal as "suited to do more harm than good." But gradually it came to be allowed that the other great religions were at least poor relations of Christianity. They were no longer distinguished from it as false from true, and there was soon a large and wide appreciation of their ethical and spiritual contents. Generally, you will find that those who led the way in this appreciation were the "suspects," the radicals, the men and women on the outer verge of the denomination,— Lydia Maria Child with her 'Progress of Religious Ideas,' and Samuel Johnson with the lectures which became at length his great octavos upon India, China, and Persia. I am glad to think that those lectures were read to this society; for Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson, ever the best of friends, were especially of one mind and heart in this matter of the "sympathy of religions." T. W. Higginson, to whom we owe this happy designation, was a third with them some forty years ago. In the next decade came James Freeman Clarke's 'Ten Great Religions,' a book too anxious to make out that Christianity is a *pleroma*, containing everything that is good in all the other faiths, which, nevertheless, has done more than any other of our time to break down the old invidious distinctions between them and Christianity. During the last thirty years the Science of Comparative Religion has created a splendid body of literature, re-enforcing the noble confidence of our Unitarian pioneers with every needed argument and illustra-

tion. It was no accident that the great Parliament of Religions recently held in Chicago was so largely Unitarian in its inception, in the predominance of Unitarian thought, and in the multitude of familiar faces in the sympathetic throng. It was the natural expression of a confidence in religion and humanity as much greater things than Christianity, which has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength for half a century. And this confidence would of itself, ere this, have been fatal to the supernatural theory of Christianity, could it have had no great allies. For in the other great religions Christianity has seen its supernaturalist pretensions as in a glass, and seen that they have no beauty that it should desire them any more. The same processes of thought and feeling which have produced these pretensions in Christianity have been elsewhere at work, and to everywhere accept them or reject them has been found to be the only rational thing. Christianity has become for us one of the great religions of the world, one of the great historic manifestations of the religious sentiment which is of universal scope; and we are less anxious to establish its superiority to its companions than to find in them some confirmation of the best in it, and some rebuke and shame for what is feeble in our thought and faithless in our lives.

Time was when some among us were intent on purging the denomination of those persons who could not, they imagined, "without usurpation, assume the honorable style of a Christian." But latterly our Unitarian conservatives have been more

intent on showing those who cannot read their Christian title clear how easily it can be done. "Are we still Christians?" is a question that has agitated many earnest minds and many noble hearts. It is a question that brings us back to the point from which we set out,— the different meanings that the words "Christian" and "Christianity" have taken on from first to last. We are not Christians by the sacramental standard of Rome or the dogmatic standard of Geneva. But, then, no more was Jesus, whom they called the Christ, a Christian by these standards. Nothing could be much further from his way in religion than their way. If nearness to his way decides, we dare believe that we are a hundred times more near to him than they. We are not Christians, if, in order to be Christians, we must accept Christianity as a supernatural religion, and the New Testament as its supernatural report. But doubtless we are Christians in the statistician's liberal sense. We are inhabitants of Christendom, inheritors and sharers of a Christian civilization, which for good and ill has, and has had, incalculable influence upon our lives. To call ourselves Christians in this sense is but to acknowledge a historic origin and obligation. But we have another reason, as deep as this is broad, for so calling ourselves, for daring to believe that we may so call ourselves without presumption or absurdity; namely, that we find ourselves in vital sympathy with everything that is most fundamental in the character and teachings of Jesus,— his love of God and man, his elevation of morality above ritual or creed, his demand for

a right spirit in our actions as well as an external conformity to the moral law, his sympathy with the poor and miserable, his compassionate tenderness for those who had been overborne by the temptations of their lot. Something of these things, no doubt, we find in all the great religions. Why, then, choose him to give our faith a name? We have not chosen him, but he has chosen us. We are in the line of his succession. And then, too, I see not how, so long as the grand and sweet humanity of Jesus is miserably obscured and ravaged and despoiled by honest but mistaken zeal, we can help thrilling with a generous loyalty to him, can help putting forth some good endeavor to rescue him from those who do him grievous wrong, if possibly we may restore him to his rightful place among the bravest and the simplest of mankind. If such is our behavior, it will matter little by what name we call ourselves or by what name we are called.

VI.

CONCERNING JESUS.

It was long since conceded by many Roman Catholic and Anglican scholars that the Trinitarian conception of Jesus could not be found in the New Testament. It is, they say, a conception arrived at by the Church divinely guided by the Holy Spirit. It would be very difficult to establish the truth of this assertion in its entirety, but it is not so manifestly untrue as the assertion of the uncritical Protestant that the Trinitarian doctrine can be found completely fashioned in the New Testament. I say the uncritical Protestant; for it would be impossible to find a critical Protestant, either an able scholar or a careful student of the New Testament, who would hazard this assertion. Every Trinitarian scholar knows and teaches that his Trinitarian doctrine is at best an inference from certain passages in the New Testament. Whether a sound inference or not can be decided only by the weight of scholarship. But, in truth, it is absurd to talk about the New Testament teachings concerning this or that, as if the New Testament were a single book, and not a collection of twenty-seven books, varying from twenty-seven pages to half a page in length. And it is equally absurd to quote from one of these books

or another as if they were all of equal value in deciding any question of the most primitive conception of Jesus. It is to the first three Gospels that we must go for that most primitive conception. It is true that in their present form their date is later than that of Paul's genuine Epistles by from twenty-five to fifty years. But because they are so much more traditional than Paul's Epistles, so much less speculative, they bring us much nearer to the fountain-head of early Christian thought. Even within their limits we have not a perfectly consistent representation of the nature of Jesus any more than of the order of his life and the details of his experience. It is in 'Matthew' that we reach the highest point of exaltation: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Even this reflection of the afterglow of pious adulation is still within the bounds of a purely humanitarian conception. The idea is of a dignity and office to be bestowed on Jesus as a reward of his faithfulness unto death and through the medium of his resurrection. And let me say, in passing, that we have here exactly the Socinian conception of Jesus, Socinus and his followers building up their doctrine from this and allied phrases, while Arius and his followers built up theirs from phrases of Paul's later Epistles and the Fourth Gospel. The diversified contents of the New Testament and the irrational conception of their unity are responsible for many of the differences and quarrels of the Christian world. Nowhere in the Synoptics is there anything fundamentally inconsistent with the humanity of Jesus. When we consider that they were not

written, as we now have them, until from forty to seventy years after the death of Jesus, and that in the mean time Paul's genuine Epistles and the 'Epistle to the Hebrews' had all been written, it is astonishing how little the Synoptics are colored by these important writings. It only proves with what tenacity the human idea of Jesus held its ground, and how slowly the speculative theories of Paul fought their way to general recognition. The Synoptic Gospels are the Gospels of the early church, the church of the apostles, the Jewish Christians. They embody their beliefs. And it does not admit of any doubt that the early church, the earliest church, the Jewish Christian, was absolutely Unitarian, and strictly humanitarian in its conception of Jesus, for the reason that it was Jewish and that its central dogma was that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. That even here we have arrived at the simplicity of Jesus cannot be affirmed with perfect confidence, seeing that so great a scholar as Dr. Martineau holds that Jesus was wholly innocent of the Messianic rôle; that it was imposed upon him by his followers after he was powerless to resist. But accepting, as I think we must, the general truth of the New Testament representation of the conscious and acknowledged Messiahship of Jesus, by that sign he was a man; for the Jewish Messiah was never conceived as being anything else. The suggestion that he was God would have impressed any pious Jew as the most monstrous blasphemy. With every successive step in the exaltation of Jesus Judaism became alienated from Christianity more and more, and with his arrival

at divine honors the last hope of an extended Jewish Christianity ceased, and the long centuries of Jewish suffering at Christian hands, the punishment of Unitarian fidelity, began.

The Synoptics are Unitarian, humanitarian Gospels. The Jesus of their representation is a human being. He works miracles, but the ability to work miracles was not supposed to be inconsistent with the nature of a human being. It is ascribed to the disciples of Jesus, to various Old Testament personages, even to the enemies of Jesus by himself: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?" The average humanitarian is perhaps too quick to argue from the prominence of the title "Son of Man" as compared with the title "Son of God." Jesus never applies the latter to himself. In what sense did he use the former? The ablest critics are not here agreed. (Compare Kuenen and Carpenter, for example.) If in the sense of 'Daniel,' where the phrase occurs, and where Jesus found it, then it was not a phrase of individual application. "The coming of the Son of Man" meant the coming of the true Israel. Much of the evidence looks as if Jesus used it in this sense, and that afterward it came to be used as descriptive of himself. This is one of the nicest critical questions, about which I could easily say more than you would care to hear. But, if Jesus liked to so designate himself, why did he like to? Certainly "the Son of Man" is one of the last phrases by which a man would choose to designate himself if he wished to be considered in any special way the Son of God or

God himself. The title "Son of God" had no reference originally to the miraculous birth of Jesus as celebrated in 'Matthew' and 'Luke.' This doctrine formed no part of the earliest conception of Jesus' nature or origin; for side by side with the stories of his miraculous birth we have genealogies tracing the line of his descent from David *through Joseph*, and these genealogies must have been written before the stories of miraculous birth became current. Even so late as 75 A.D., when 'Mark' appeared, they were unknown to the author or had not been accepted as a valid part of the received tradition. This in 'Mark' and in the 'Gospel to the Hebrews,' which was apparently the basis of our 'Matthew,' began with the baptism of Jesus. The 'Gospel to the Hebrews' began, "There was a certain man named Jesus, about thirty years old, who chose us out." Here from the descent of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus, as in the Synoptics, dates the Messianic dignity of Jesus. Not only was he purely human, but he was not invested with the attributes of his official station till he had come well-nigh to middle age. The stories of his miraculous birth make his Messiahship congenital, but they do nothing more. In the Synoptics there is not a hint of those doctrines of pre-existence which play so conspicuous a part in Paul, in the 'Epistle to the Hebrews' and in the Fourth Gospel. The miraculous birth did not detract from the humanity of Jesus for the mythologists who fashioned it. They had never questioned the entire humanity of Samuel and Isaac, both, as they thought, miraculously born.

The doctrine of the sinless Jesus was another step forward in the process of his deification. The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance, and consequently implied the consciousness of sin; and in the 'Gospel to the Hebrews' Jesus says, "What sin have I committed, that I should go and be baptized of him?" and then adds, "Unless my saying this very thing is sinful." An exquisite moral perception went to the framing of this story. There are whole chapters of our received New Testament that are not worth so much. The writer saw that for Jesus to consider himself sinless would convict him of the sin of spiritual pride. No wonder that the tendency to exalt the person of Jesus more and more allowed the Gospel which contained this penetrating remark to lapse into obscurity, although it had, as had no other, the look of an authentic apostolic document.

In the Epistles of Saint Paul the glorification of Jesus is much further advanced than in the Synoptics; but, if the limits of humanity are overpassed, the measure of Deity is not attained. To the actual historical Jesus Paul was quite indifferent. He does not quote his words. He does not recount his deeds. His thought did not centre in the historic Jesus, but in an ideal Christ of his own conception. *This ideal Christ was a man.* Paul never calls him God, and would no doubt have resented the imputation that he was tending to do so. But Paul's "man Christ Jesus" was a very different man from him of the Synoptics. He is "the second man from heaven." Paul was not a consistent thinker; and,

if we try to make all that he said hold fast together, we shall only weary ourselves without result. This was his first thought,—that Jesus was glorified by his death and resurrection; but this could not satisfy his speculative genius. So far, his is a doctrine after the Socinian Unitarian's own heart. But a glory "put on" by Jesus did not satisfy him. He wanted a glory essential to his personality; and so, finally, his death and resurrection became only the means of his resuming a glory which he had ages before his earthly manifestation,—the glory of a heavenly, archetypal man. Henceforth to Paul the human life of Jesus was the merest episode in the career of the heavenly man, an image of the divine glory, but not less an image of the possible glory of mankind. Here is sufficient proof that, however Paul might exalt the attributes of Jesus, he never thought of him as God.

The New Testament carries us one step beyond Paul, even supposing that 'Colossians' and 'Philippians,' if not 'Ephesians,' were the work of his hand. The Fourth Gospel is that step beyond. This Gospel was one of many and various attempts to state the doctrine of Christ's nature in terms of the Alexandrian philosophy; and, as the most consistent, the most brilliant, the most imaginative, it threw every other attempt into the shade. It originated (perhaps early) in the second quarter of the second century.* On the one hand, the writer found the Alexandrian doctrine of the Logos,—the divine reason, the creative agency,—and on the other hand he

*See Dr. Emil Schürer's statement of the question.

found a conception of Jesus expressed in terms the most exalted, and bearing a very strong resemblance to the terms of the Logos-doctrine of Philo Judæus, the great Alexandrian teacher of the doctrine. Philo had never dreamed of a human incarnation of the Logos, and Paul had never identified his exalted Christ with the Alexandrian Word. The first to do this was pretty certainly not the writer of the Fourth Gospel. It occurred to many writers about the same time. To effect an alliance between Christianity and Alexandrian Platonism was the one passionate enthusiasm midway of the second century. In the Fourth Gospel this enthusiasm shrivels the humanity of Jesus in its eager flame. Having such a book to reckon with, it is astonishing that a humanitarian conception of Jesus has still confidently appealed to the whole New Testament. Humanitarian this book is not, but it is still Unitarian, — Unitarian in the most precarious manner, but still Unitarian. For all the likeness between the Logos-Christ and God, there is also difference, and there is subordination. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself." These words express the idea of the independent personality and subordination of the Logos. Thus the New Testament Jesus, on the topmost height of his development, though infinitely more than man, is still not God. If the dictum of the Fourth Gospel were final, nothing would remain for us but to consider Jesus a super-angelic being, coexistent with God, the Creator of the world, and still — not God. This is Unitarianism of the least humanitarian type,

the creed of Arius. But why should we accept the dictum of this Gospel as final, when we know the circumstances of its origin, and know how widely it departs from the primitive tradition and how arbitrary was its identification of Jesus with the Logos of the schools? A book so written comes to us with no more authority than any other piece of ancient speculation, and its doctrine is to be accepted or rejected according as it does or does not square with the historic facts and with a rational conception of the world.

The Fourth Gospel was chronologically about one-third of the way along from the ethical teachings of Jesus to the theological, non-ethical Nicene Creed of 325 A.D. It was a losing battle for the humanitarian conception of Jesus all the way; a losing battle for the Unitarian conception, too, but the battle for this was not lost when the last word of the New Testament was spoken. But the wonder is that after this, as the Jewish Christians, cherishing the humanitarian tradition, became an ever smaller party, the Greeks and Romans, unembarrassed by that tradition, and conceiving Jesus merely as a subject for free speculation, took nearly two centuries to traverse the short distance between the Fourth Gospel and the Nicene Creed. Evidently the Unitarianism of the early church died hard. From 150 to 325 A.D. there was a perfect medley of beliefs. Tertullian, about 200 A.D., the first to use the word "Trinity," thought the deifiers much more dangerous than the humanitarians. Fifty years later Sabellius advocated the doctrine that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

are all emanations of the one supreme God,— substantially the Unitarian doctrine which emerged in the sixteenth century, with Michael Servetus for its defender unto death. But about the same time Origen announced the doctrine of Christ's eternal generation; and this was the doctrine which triumphed at Nicæa, whereat the peasant son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, ended the long journey of his ideal transformation, and became "of one substance with the Father." The deification was at length complete.

The details of that completion furnish the most interesting chapter in the history of the early church. You will find them admirably set forth in Dean Stanley's chapter on the council of Nicæa in his 'Eastern Church.' They are by no means reassuring to those who go to the early councils for the oracles of God. It is true that the council of Nicæa, the first œcumenical council, was less furious and murderous than some others; but, in the conduct of its delegates and the motives that actuate them, a modern political convention is not more disreputable. There, too, subserviency to the boss was the controlling principle; and the boss was Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who delayed his baptism so that it might wash out his prospective sins. Arius was knocked down by an opposing bishop; and, when his creed was read, a storm of disapprobation greeted it, and it was torn in pieces by his enemies. What was the creed of Arius? It was that the Son was subordinate to the Father, and created by him out of nothing. To this strange

complexion had the Unitarian doctrine come at length, to this in opposition to the Athanasian doctrine that the Son was eternally begotten. The spirit of verbal compromise appeared upon the scene in the person of Eusebius of Cæsarea. He produced a creed of which the emperor had approved, and to which the Athanasians could make no objection except that an Arian had offered it and that the Arians would agree to it. What the Athanasians wanted was a creed that the Arians could not accept; and, when a letter was read from an Arian bishop, protesting that "to assert the Son to be uncreated would be to say that he was *homoöusion*,— that is, *of one substance* with the Father,"— clearly the thing to do was to frame a creed embodying the obnoxious word. And this was done; and he that had once been the teacher of Nazareth became "very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." Constantine agreed to this, and advised Eusebius to do so with his own private understanding that "of one substance" should mean "of like substance"; that is, that the Athanasian word should have an Arian meaning. You will find it difficult, perhaps, to adjust your sympathies in this matter. Between Arius dating his Jesus from before all worlds and hailing him as their Creator, and Athanasius holding him eternally begotten, you will think there was not much to choose. You will imagine that the general course of Christendom would have been much the same if Arius had triumphed. It is true that Unitarians have generally sided with Arius in that weary fight;

but it is also true that of late years the thought of Athanasius has approved itself to a good many of our theologians as less mechanical, more philosophical. Then, too, it has seemed to save the humanity of Jesus, making him God, to be sure, but *also* man, having two natures; while the doctrine of Arius swallowed up his humanity entirely in the nature of a being as unique as God himself. A few years ago we used to class a few of our older men as Arians; but theirs was a modified Arianism at the worst, and they have no successors.

Neither the ends nor the beginnings of historic movements are so sharp and sudden as the chronologists represent them. The Arian party did not at once become extinct when shadowed by the imperial frown. For two or three centuries after that it had its ups and downs, sometimes with a council or the court in its favor, and sometimes in imperial or ecclesiastical disgrace. Meantime the Trinitarian scheme, which was by no means completed at Nicæa, was gradually completed by the personification of the Holy Spirit; and Mary, at the council of Ephesus, where one bishop was trampled to death by another in the fury of debate, was declared *theotokos*, the mother of God! For centuries Unitarianism in any form was a thing unnamed, unknown. It remained unnamed as Unitarian until the sixteenth century. It became known again with the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. Luther and Melanchthon had their own doubts about the orthodox dogma which they violently suppressed. Here and there the orthodox dogma was impeached at almost every

point, and one variation from it was very apt to lead to another. Men differing in their particular results were attracted to each other by their common spirit of inquiry and the common danger it involved. Italy and Spain were the countries most prolific of heresy as distinguished from the schism of the Protestant revolt. The papal jurisdiction and the Inquisition sent the heretics abroad in search of sympathy. Many came to England; and in the Strangers' Church in London, upon which Archbishop Cranmer smiled, there was many a tentative departure from the orthodox creed. Chief among the Italians associated with this movement of thought was Bernardino Ochino, a lofty spirit, whose story should be better known by those who love to read about "the brave light-bringers" of the world. Born in 1487, he died in 1564, driven out from Zürich to starve in exile because of his 'Thirty Dialogues' in which he had ventured doubts about the Trinity which he could not solve. The name of Servetus is much better known. His Spanish name was Miguel Serveto; and he was born in Tuleda, Navarre, in 1509. His was a strong and brilliant mind, insatiably curious, in biology going far toward the discovery of the circulation of the blood. He was a scholar of very great ability, a thinker of immense originality, often extremely modern in the substance and the form of his discourse. He was not coldly intellectual, but a man of lively sensibility, eager and emotional, of a too trustful disposition, as shown by the event; no irresponsible free-lance, but a man of passionate devotion to the truth and to his own convictions,— not

content with privately enjoying them, but demanding their consideration in the highest court of Protestant appeal, that which John Calvin, born in the same year, held in Geneva. If he had gone to Calvin, seeking his advice and counsel, or even cultivating a decent appearance of deference to his opinion, he might have died in his bed, and Calvin need not have been his murderer. When he sent Calvin the manuscript of his 'Christianity Restored,' in 1546, and reopened a correspondence with him, Calvin had long been aware of his heretical opinions. But now Servetus proposed to set him right, and that made all the difference in the world. There was mutual recrimination. The correspondence was broken off; and Calvin wrote to this one and that, that, if Servetus came to Geneva, he should never leave the place alive. Servetus knew of his resolve. *Mihi ob eam rem moriendum esse certo scio*,—"On account of this thing I know that I must die." His prophecy and Calvin's threat were both fulfilled. What possessed him to dare the tiger in his den we do not know. He came to Geneva, Aug. 13, 1553, meaning to get off as soon as possible. But the next day was Sunday, and he could not get a boat. Moreover, not to appear singular, he had to go to church. He was seen, recognized, and arrested. A trial was absurd, for Calvin had condemned him in advance. Nevertheless, once instituted, it dragged along until October 26; and on October 27 he was burned to death over a slow fire. He was made of softer stuff than Calvin, but he would not recant to save his life. Even his last despairing cry attested his unwavering faith in what he had believed.

Calvin's reason for his course is obvious: his spiritual supremacy had been impeached. His excuse is hard to find. Few of our modern orthodox would be able to detect the flaw which differentiated the opinions of Servetus from his own. They were not the opinions of Arius, whom he found "unequal to the glory of Christ." They were not the doctrines of his contemporaries, the Socini, who reproduced the humanitarian conception of the Synoptic Gospels in its most exalted form. They were those Sabellian doctrines of the third century which had been pushed into a corner by the Arians and Athanasians, wrestling for the mastery. Servetus held that Jesus was a manifestation of the Father from before all worlds and time, yet not from all eternity. The spurious text of the "Three Heavenly Witnesses," which has been dropped from the revised translation, the only approximately Trinitarian text in the authorized version, was not too Trinitarian for his belief. Few of our modern orthodox are as orthodox as he. In the annals of persecution it would be difficult to find a victim sacrificed for a more infinitesimal variation from the persecutor's creed.

Many in those times were the variations from the orthodox standards; and, seeking for their cause, we find it in the enthusiastic study of the New Testament, a natural sequel to the substitution of the Bible for the Church as the fountain of authoritative truth. But the New Testament, as we have seen, teaches one thing here, and another there. In one set of texts Servetus found his Sabellian doctrine; in another set some found the hair-breadth dif-

ference from that of the Arian doctrine. But on neither of these lines was Unitarianism to found a school and build a church. Rather on that of the Socini, Lælius and Faustus, uncle and nephew of that name, both born at Siena,— the uncle in 1525, the nephew in 1539. Were it true, as often stated, that the younger did but publish what the elder thought and wrote in secret, it would be harder than it is now to explain the friendly relations that subsisted between the elder and Calvin, though he had been as cautious and obsequious as Servetus was rash and self-confident. The uncle had at once the more sceptical and the more religious mind. The interrogation point was his favorite stop. The period was the nephew's. He was essentially a dogmatist. His genius was ecclesiastical. His darling scheme was a common worship of Calvinists, Arians, and those of his own way of thinking. This now concerns us only in its relation to Jesus. Here, as I have before indicated, his doctrine was the humanitarian doctrine of the Synoptic Gospels in its highest range. For his life of service and his obedience unto death, Jesus was highly exalted, invested with divine honors, and was therefore to be worshipped as God. On this worship of Jesus Faustus Socinus insisted to the bitter end, tacitly sacrificing to it Francis David, the noble Transylvanian, whose imprisonment for his opinion's sake made him a Unitarian martyr at his brethren's hands. Far more important than the Socinian doctrine of Christ's nature, so mechanical and artificial, was the substitution of the life and teachings of Jesus for his death

as the true centre of gravity, the power of God unto salvation.

The Socinian doctrine was embodied in the Racovian Catechism, which found its way to England early in the seventeenth century, and soon, widely planted, bore abundant fruit after its kind. Owen, one of the stiffest of the Calvinists, averred that there was not a city, town, and scarce a village where some of this poison was not poured forth. The father of English Unitarianism was John Biddle (or Bidle), whose books were burned by the hangman in 1654, and who narrowly escaped their fate, only to die in prison after the Restoration. From this time forward the Socinian type of Unitarianism was pre-eminently the English type, though John Milton and John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton held to the Arian doctrine, as did also Dr. Price and many others more or less famous in the eighteenth century. But it must not be forgotten that a rational temper was inseparable from the development, and that Socinianism in the hands of Priestley and Lindsey and Belsham and their kind became something very different from Socinianism as originally taught. Even John Biddle swept aside at once that worship of Jesus which to the younger Socinus was a matter of first-rate importance, the chief cornerstone of his ecclesiastical building.

Nature does not more abhor a leap than does theology. Very gradual were the steps by which the New England mind passed from the theology of Edwards and Whitefield to that of Channing and Parker. The moral reaction from predestination

preceded the intellectual revolt from the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. The first Unitarian church in America was that of the Episcopal King's Chapel, Boston; and Dr. Freeman, the minister of the church, the grandfather by marriage of James Freeman Clarke, was apparently a Socinian in his Christology. But the first Episcopal church was the last to become Unitarian. New England Unitarianism was developed in the Congregational churches even more universally than that of England in the Presbyterian. And, while the English Christology was generally Socinian, that of New England was generally Arian. But it was little preached. The stress of Channing and Dewey and Gannett was not upon the nature and the offices, but upon the character, of Jesus. If in terms they pleaded for the miracles as sanctions of his teachings, what actually persuaded them was their intrinsic excellence. And, when the Arian conception no longer satisfied, it was not generally exchanged for the Socinian. Never was any time less suited than that of the New England Transcendentalists to the acceptance of a conception so arbitrary and mechanical. Many of these, under the lead of Emerson and Parker, passed suddenly, with startled looks, into the full light of a conception of Jesus simply and entirely human. Even now, as we read Parker's words, our hearts are swayed as pendent vines are swayed that swing in summer air. Channing had preached the imitableness of Christ's character. But how much more human was the conception of Parker! He spoke of "the imperfections of Jesus," and men half

expected that he would be struck with lightning from the sky. But, from beyond that sky, others could almost hear the voice of Jesus, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." How good, how sweet, how excellent, after the long centuries of exile, to be welcomed back once more to the warm precincts of humanity, and folded to a loving human heart! To be once more in Boston what he had been in Nazareth and Jerusalem,—a man among his fellow-men!

But Parker's thought at first was meat for strong men only: it was not milk for babes. Indeed, the advance of thought in one direction meant its retardation in another. Men's growing sense of contradictory and imperfect elements in the New Testament suggested the temporary subterfuge that it was not a revelation, but the record of a revelation, the real revelation being the life and character of Jesus, the perfect revelation of God in perfect man. This, which is exactly the position held by Dr. Lyman Abbott at the present time, was the position of Unitarians generally about forty years ago,—a much more advanced and liberal position than that of the earlier Unitarians, a much less rational and consistent position than that to which the great majority of Unitarians have now arrived.

It is a position hardly less mechanical and artificial than that of the Socinian dogma, with its investiture of the human Jesus with divine honors which require for him the adoration of the heart, the invocation of men's spoken prayers. That Jesus was a perfect man is an assertion as impossible to

prove as that the inhabitants of Mars eat nothing but unleavened bread. To adduce anything to the contrary would be a most ungracious business. But certainly there are things about Jesus in the New Testament which are not helpful to the doctrine of his impeccability,— for example, that dreadful treatment of his mother, and that cursing of the fig-tree for not bearing fruit before the time. Some forty years ago this question was argued by Dr. Martineau and Francis Newman, a younger brother of the cardinal. The whole trend of Dr. Martineau's argument was to the discrediting of the New Testament and the putting of an ideal conception in its place. In discrediting the New Testament, probably he did not go too far. Certainly, he did no more than was necessary for his argument; for it is impossible to accept the New Testament representation of Jesus, and at the same time hold that he was "tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin." But we may believe that the actual character of Jesus was much higher than that of the New Testament representation, and still find ourselves unable to accept the doctrine that he was a perfect man. Yet there is one particular of that representation which, in this connection, is deserving of the most serious consideration. It is where Jesus, called "Good Master," answers: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, and that is God." That, it would seem, must be a genuine report; for it is just the kind of thing not to be interpolated,— just the kind of thing to be got rid of, if it could be without violence. If moral perfection

means the doing of no conscious wrong, this would be final. But moral perfection means not only the doing of no conscious wrong, but the doing of no actual wrong. If we know too little of the inner life of Jesus to predicate of him the doing of no conscious wrong, and know that he himself refused to let another call him good, we know enough about him to know that he was not intellectually infallible. Yet without being this he could not be absolutely free from actual wrong. We often hear the remark, "To say that he was without fault would be to say that he was not human." That makes it clear that humanity carries with it the presumption of some faultiness. To establish a particular exception would require the certainty that the inward voice was never disobeyed, and that it always made an infallible pronouncement as to what ought to be done. It is hardly less than wicked or insane to pretend that in the case of Jesus we have this double certainty, especially with his clear voice saying to us across the centuries, "Why callest thou me good?"

But the intellectual hardihood of our Unitarians forty years ago, who affirmed the moral perfection of Jesus, was greatly in excess of what it would have been if they had merely affirmed this. For they at the same time affirmed that Jesus was the only perfect man; while yet it was possible, and always had been possible, for other men to be as good as he. Such an affirmation implies little short of absolute omniscience in the person making it. How does he know the inmost heart and life of all the millions who have lived and died upon the earth? If by

moral perfection is meant freedom from conscious sin, some of us have known men and women of whom we think we could affirm so much. Why, then, deny of Jesus what we concede is possible for men as such? We do not deny it. We only say we do not, cannot, know about a thing so secret and obscure. And then, besides, that inexpugnable saying will recur, "Why callest thou me good?" Moreover, moral perfection is much more than doing nothing which is evidently wrong to us. It is doing the rightest possible thing under the circumstances every time. To do this, a man must be much more infallible than the pope pretends to be. For he pretends to be infallible only when speaking *ex cathedra*, not in the innumerable exigencies of each social and domestic day.

So, then, without appealing to certain passages in the New Testament, which, however consonant with "the second person of the Trinity" do not reflect a perfect human goodness, it is evident that, when our Unitarians of forty years ago affirmed the moral perfection of Jesus, they did so without intellectual seriousness. It is evident that those who still hold to this conception, Unitarians or others, do not sufficiently consider what they say. For they imply not only the omniscience of Jesus, but their own.

But even if the golden haze with which Martineau invested himself when contending with Newman had made him impervious to Newman's solid shot, even if the moral perfection of Jesus had then been established, whether in the narrower or in the wider and truer sense, what should we have to say of the

other part of the conception,— the perfect revelation of God in this perfect man? What, if not this? That, however such a conception may have agreed with the pre-scientific thought of God, it has no agreement with the thought of him which science has revealed. The Christ of Arius and the "second person of the Trinity" is the Creator and Sustainer of all worlds. But his attributes cannot be transferred to a man, however perfect, to suit the exigencies of an irrational phrase. Those who delight in this phrase — the perfect revelation of God in perfect man — do not pretend that the immeasurably great and glorious revelation of modern science is any part of that revelation which we have in the mind and character of the Man of Nazareth. But, surely, it is no little part of God's revelation of himself to us. Surely, a revelation in which this has no part cannot be a perfect one. Nor any more can that which is exclusive of the beseeching beauty of the world, of the great course of history, of the genius of Homer and Shakspere, of Raphael and Rembrandt, of Beethoven and Wagner, of Washington and Lincoln, of the heroism and devotion of innumerable brave and tender men and women who have lived and died for truth and righteousness. Bright is the laurel upon Jesus' brow which once the brier mocked. We would not rob it of one shining leaf. But thousands besides him have done their part, with sea and land, with sun and stars, with history and art, in revealing to us something of the perfection of the Eternal. And when we consider the vastness of his revelation in the order and

the beauty of the world and in the course of history, in the genius of his poets and the goodness of his saints, though we know that this revelation is far from perfect, yet is it so much more perfect than that vouchsafed to us in the mind and heart of Jesus that to speak of this as perfect seems either foolishness or blasphemy. It does not so much bespeak a lively sense of the commanding excellence of Jesus as it bespeaks a strange and miserable indifference to the boundless majesty of God.

I have dwelt longer on this phase of Unitarian thought than I should have done, if, while less and less attractive for the Unitarian mind, it had not passed over into the keeping of the progressive orthodoxy of our time. But the objections I have urged have naturally appealed to many, and the answer that they make is that the revelation in Jesus is a revelation of the perfect moral, not universal, nature and character of God. The answer does not help. The moral perfection of God is a perfection that expresses his relation to innumerable worlds, incalculable times. To imagine that we have a perfect revelation of it in the provincial life of Jesus, known for a few months only, seen through a mist which no critical splendor can entirely dissipate, is to imagine as irrationally and unworthily as it is possible for men of natural intelligence to do. For God's thoughts are not our thoughts; neither are his ways our ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than our thoughts, and his ways than our ways.

To-day the pure humanity of Jesus is the prevail-

ing doctrine of the Unitarian body. It would be hard to find among us an Arian thinking of Jesus as the creator of all worlds, himself created before time began to be. It would be only less hard to find a true Socinian thinking of Jesus as a human being exalted to the rank of God. But there are not a few who still think of him as a perfect man; and many more who speak of him as such, without thinking much about it. There are also those who think of him as working miracles, not to attest his mission, but from the fulness of his love; and others who accept some of the miracles as facts, but tell us they were as natural as the blowing clover and the falling rain. But the natural thing is the habitual thing, and so we cannot go with these. The laws of Nature are her habitual processes, and that one should be allowed to play fast and loose with these as a reward for keeping the law of righteousness is a doctrine which not even the enthusiastic conviction of Dr. Furness can commend to our intelligence. There are few, if any, who now believe in the miraculous birth of Jesus; and those who believe in his resurrection from the dead wear their belief with such a difference from that of the Unitarian fathers that it is but the shadow of a shade. Maintaining the past rate of progress, before the century completes its round the pure humanity of Jesus will be as generally received among us as the unity of God.

Such a conclusion will not be very different from that held by the first Christian Unitarians in the first decades of the Christian era, before Paul had written, and the first Gospels had assumed their

present form. Those who hold back from it because it implies that Jesus was "a mere man" would do well to consider what a man may be and do before they qualify the noun with any adjective of contempt or disrespect. Such is man's body, such his mind, such his affections, such his conscience, such his sense of infinite and eternal things, that within the scope of his terrestrial and immortal possibility there is room enough for all that Jesus was and did to swing with easy motion, like planets on their heavenly way. Not "a mere man," but a man, and such a man that, when we have torn veil after veil of mythological illusion, and come face to face with him at length, or as nearly as may be, all our minds go out to him in gladsome recognition of his spiritual genius, and all our hearts in loving admiration of his broad humanity, his compassion for the poor and miserable, his demand for inward holiness, as well as outward homage to the moral law. There is nothing in the ultimate Jesus of our critical investigation that need be concealed or that invites the least apology. That he partook of the imperfect notions of his time means that he was not a monster, but a natural man. That he identified his mission with the Messianic office means that he conceived that office so loftily that he could not but identify it with his own spiritual ideal. Where was the mistake, seeing that the conception had always been as plastic as the artist's clay to every prophet's mind? But, if it was a mistake, it was such an one as humanity will cherish when it has forgotten all the millions who have never been mistaken because they

never ventured anything for man or God. And the pure humanity of Jesus is the talisman by which he shall keep off the dangers that are threatening his name and fame. Isolated from humanity as God or demi-god or wonder-worker or the one perfect man, he will dwindle more and more, and shine with dimmer light. But set him frankly among men, and the fierce light that beats upon him there will but the more reveal the greatness of his mind, the goodness of his heart, the splendor of his soul. The greatest of his fellow-men,—such is the modesty of greatness,—shall hail him as a greater than themselves. The kindest and the best shall find in him a blessing on their good endeavor, a summons to the ardors and the satisfactions of an endless quest.

VII.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

Beginning, as we have done heretofore, with the first Christian times, we find that the Unitarians of those times — that is, the first disciples of Jesus — were Jews ; and, as Jews, their doctrine of a future life was that of a physical resurrection from the dead. This was a doctrine which the Jews had only recently acquired. The first hint of it in the Old Testament is in the 'Book of Daniel,' one of the last books admitted into the Old Testament canon for the good reason that it was one of the last written ; for, while it is given out as a book written six centuries before Christ, it was actually written in the year 162 B.C., or very near that year on one side or the other. Always famous borrowers, the Jews had borrowed this doctrine from their Persian conquerors. There are texts in the Old Testament before that in 'Daniel' which have been forced to yield a similar meaning, but a competent criticism sets them all aside as accidental resemblances or metaphorical allusions. Before borrowing the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the Jews had their doctrine of Sheol, which hardly could be called a doctrine of a future life. It was not a doctrine peculiar to the Jews, but the common property of the

Semitic peoples,— the doctrine of a miserable pit or underworld in which the ghosts of men endured a dull, half-conscious life in death, utterly joyless and forlorn, having no beauty that any one should desire it. It would seem that it should have been an easy matter to develop this doctrine into something better, especially as the Jews had originally had the advantage of a lively contact with the Egyptians, with whom a future life was as real as the present, organized as completely as their own dynasties, with judges passing upon every man's earthly conduct and apportioning his due reward, with sanctions appealing to men's constant hope and fear. That the Hebrews of the Exodus, spoiling the Egyptians, left this treasure behind as if it were the merest dross, while they took along the rite of circumcision, is evidence of their carnal mind. Nevertheless, it was from Egypt that the Jews first got a real doctrine of immortality, not, however, until a thousand years after the Exodus. You will find this doctrine in 'The Wisdom of Solomon,' a book not included in the Jewish canon nor in any Protestant canon on a level with the Old Testament and New. It is one of the books of the Apocrypha, unfortunately one the date of which is hard to fix, the critics varying from 200 B.C. to 50 A.D. If the earlier date, that of Professor Toy, is the true one, this real doctrine of immortality antedates the resurrection doctrine of 'Daniel.' I say it came from Egypt, and by this I mean something more than that 'The Wisdom of Solomon' was written by some Alexandrian Jew. It was, and by one strongly subject to Greek influ-

ences; but Greek influences alone do not account for his doctrine of immortality. The air of Egypt was full of this doctrine, and the Greek influences themselves were saturated with it. "For God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity." Nowhere in the Old Testament or New is there a doctrine of immortality so large and full as this of a book which Jews reject, which Protestants but half receive, to which only Roman Catholics give an honored place among the best, as it so well deserves.

Evidently, this real doctrine of immortality was less congenial to the Jewish mind than the resurrection of the body. It was the latter that prevailed. For one thing it was a doctrine of Yahweh's partiality for the Jewish people. The resurrection was for Jews alone. In Daniel's representation some should awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and some to everlasting life. But the bane and blessing were exclusively a Jewish matter. The 'Book of Enoch,' later than 'Daniel,' quoted as Holy Scripture in the New Testament, but never admitted to any canon but that of the Abyssinian Church, teaches a general resurrection; but this doctrine did not at once prevail. It was not that of the Jews, and presumably it was not that of the Christians in the first Christian century. Indeed, the Christians still further narrowed it. The brave sincerity of Dr. Hedge could find but two texts in the New Testament affirming a general resurrection, and Professor Toy objects to one of these. The resurrection was for "the chosen people" only; and

"the chosen people" were, in early Christian thought, the faithful followers of Christ.

How was the doctrine of the resurrection related to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? In later Christian thought the former has been based upon the latter. We have had Unitarian ministers within twenty years insisting that without the resurrection of Jesus we have no ground for a belief in immortality. Paul did not so conceive. He said, "If we rise not, then is Christ not risen." There is not in the New Testament a more suggestive text. The doctrine of a physical resurrection was no such strain on the imagination for men who lived in constant expectation of the last trump as for men anticipating an indefinite inhumation and complete decay. Early Christianity was but one of many Jewish movements that involved a more or less extended resurrection of the dead as one feature of the quick-coming day of the Lord. The resurrection of Jesus, therefore, was not so very wonderful to the early Christian mind. It was merely "the first fruits of them that slept." The rest would follow soon. The general expectation made the particular belief concerning the resurrection ten times, a hundred times, easier to accept than it would otherwise have been. That the particular belief also did much to confirm the general expectation there can be no doubt; but it played no such part in early as it has played in later Christian thought. Its function, in Paul's thinking, was to establish the Messiahship of Jesus, and to show that in making him accursed by the manner of his death,— "Cursed be he

that hangeth on a tree "— the Jewish law was "hoist with its own petard," self-cursed, self-abolished. Later there came a time when, in the last book of the New Testament, the 'Second Epistle of Peter,' we find a writer lamenting that "since the fathers fell asleep all things remain as they were from the beginning." Jesus had not come back, and no resurrection trumpet had awakened the faithful from their last long sleep. Gradually the hope of such things died away or was indefinitely deferred. Then, very naturally, the resurrection of Jesus assumed a different rôle, and became the ground of an illogical persuasion of man's general immortality.

So long as there were any Unitarians in the early Christian Church,— that is to say, for some five centuries,— the Unitarian doctrine of a future life was that of other Christians, the doctrine of a physical resurrection from the dead. This doctrine remained the universal doctrine of Christendom during the thousand years which were for Unitarianism a period of dire eclipse. It did not even maintain itself at the height of Paul's "spiritual body," in his letter to the Corinthians, which was related to the decaying flesh as sprouting grain to seed. This doctrine, which no modern Unitarian believes, is still thought good enough for purposes of pious consolation by many Unitarian preachers, and, with slack conscience, is incorporated in our liturgical books; but it was a much better doctrine than the one which afterward prevailed. Thomas Aquinas, mightiest doctor of the Church, contended "that no other substance would be raised except that which belonged

to the individual at the moment of death,"—a view that would make an emaciating sickness for some of us an end to be desired. The Roman Catholic Church indorsed this view at the Council of Trent, declaring for the resurrection of the identical body of flesh without deformities or superfluities. This view has never been expressed with more revolting frankness and absurdity than by Dr. Gardiner Spring, who was still fulminating from the pulpit of the Brick Church in New York when I began to preach in Brooklyn, thirty years ago. Indeed, I can remember when a real shock was given to the sensibilities of a Unitarian congregation by a preacher who came to Marblehead and preached a sermon setting forth the inconsistencies and absurdities of a physical resurrection of the buried flesh. But all the way along there was a serious limitation and practical nullification of the doctrine of a physical resurrection by the doctrine of an intermediate state. Jesus upon the cross is represented as saying to the repentant thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," showing that thus early some conceived of an independent existence of the soul, untrammelled by the fortunes of the body. A good many have contended that the soul until the resurrection of the body is kept in strict abeyance, without sense or motion; and the logic of the situation has been all upon their side. "For, if," as Dr. Hedge inquires, "the soul can exist for ages and fulfil the conditions of a moral agent without a body, why should the perished body be revived and reannexed?" But the heart has its own logic, and this very generally pre-

vailed. The resurrection of the body has been for the most part throughout the Christian centuries a superfluity, a survival, the fifth wheel to a coach. Good churchmen go on year after year solemnly affirming that they believe in "the resurrection of the dead." But what they actually believe in is "the life everlasting," which makes the resurrection of the dead of no account.

> "In vain shalt thou, or any, call
> The spirits from their golden day,
> Unless thou, too, like them, canst say,
> My spirit is at peace with all."

For those who have attained to such a thought as this, the thought of their beloved dead engaged upon "such tasks as suit the full-grown energies of heaven," the resurrection of the body retires into a background of impenetrable shade.

When Unitarianism emerged from its millennial sleep, its doctrine of a future life was related to the resurrection of Jesus somewhat differently from that of the Romanists and Calvinists. The younger Socinus denied the orthodox doctrine that death came into the world because of sin. He contended that "mortality, not immortality, is the normal issue of human life." By mortality he meant the death of the body *and the soul.* The resurrection of Jesus was a reward of his faithfulness unto death; and the faithfulness of his followers would enjoy a like reward. The utter destruction of the heathen and the wicked is a logical deduction from his teachings, but he declined to work it out.* I am left to infer that

*I follow the exposition of Dr. Alexander Gordon, an English Unitarian scholar of the highest rank.

for Socinus there was no *post-mortem* existence for the soul until the resurrection of the body. It is not conceivable that Socinian Unitarians generally accepted a doctrine so repulsive to the instincts of the affectionate and yearning heart. It is probable that they availed themselves of the inconsistency of their predecessors, and supplemented the doctrine of a fleshly resurrection with the belief that the souls of the righteous are, pending that, in conscious peace. But two centuries later the doctrine of Priestley, the chief Unitarian of his day, and in his scientific acquirements equal to any of his time, would seem to have held very closely to the doctrine of Socinus that soul and body naturally die together, and that, if they renew their life, it must be by the miraculous act of God. In such renewal he believed. He was not so illogical as to find any proof of the natural immortality of mankind in the supernatural resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That was a miracle of infinite power, and without such a miracle he conceived no resurrection to be possible. A fresh miracle for every individual believer was his rule. Do you think this was a strange belief for the discoverer of oxygen, the Huxley of his generation, born in 1733? But it was logically coherent; and, given one miracle, why should the Infinite Power hold back from as many more as might be necessary to resuscitate the saints he wished to have with him in glory everlasting?

The beginning of Channing's ministry coincided very nearly with the end of Priestley's life. In their religious thinking they were very far apart. Chan-

ning had the greatest admiration for Priestley's character and scientific genius; but, himself a New England Federalist, Priestley's sympathy with the French Revolution must have seemed to him a very doubtful matter, and for his thinking on Socinian lines he had habitual distrust. Channing's Unitarianism was not a foreign importation. It was the fruit of the reaction of his own lofty mind, benevolent heart, and exigent morality on the New England orthodoxy in which he had been reared, and from which had come some of the best impulses of his religious life. Nothing could be further from Channing's thought than the doctrine of Socinus and Priestley that the soul, equally with the body, dies a natural death, and that immortality is the miraculous gift of God. His thought was that of the great early thinker who wrote the 'Wisdom of Solomon,'—

"And scorned to blot it with a name."

He believed that "God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity." He taught that Jesus by his teachings and resurrection made immortality a certainty. But he did not dwell on either of these arguments. Had he attempted to do so, he would have found the teachings of Jesus singularly meagre on this head, and his resurrection more in need of proof than yielding it. In his great sermon upon Immortality he barely mentions the resurrection of Jesus, and then proceeds to show that the marks of man's immortal destination are in his very constitution, that God has impressed them

on his soul. It is wonderful how little this discourse has suffered from the wear of time. It anticipates all that is best in Theodore Parker's great sermon on the same subject. It has the wonderful elevation that always marked the thought of Channing, and it has it to a remarkable degree. He could never speak of the human mind without a sudden glow and flame; and here he finds in its creative, boundless energy a proof of its undying strength. Turning to the moral nature, he finds in crime itself the proofs of human greatness and an immortal nature. How but because crime is impossible without moral freedom, and because temptation is the stuff that has in it the making of a man! He has a vision of the future life that is a magnificent rebuke of those who find in the desire for immortality only the selfishness which can never have enough. The French philosopher said that, if there were no God, we should have to invent one. If there were no immortality, we should have to invent one for the realization of Channing's glorious dream. He had so little body of his own that to his friends he seemed almost pure spirit; but a life exempt from the material aspects of the world had for him no attraction. The hymn which sings rejoicingly,—

"Ye golden lamps of heaven, farewell!"

could not have been a favorite with him. He confessed that he could not, without depression, think of breaking all his ties to the material universe. "When I think," he said, "of its infinite extent, of the countless worlds which astronomy discloses to me, I feel

that material nature, including all the beings connected with it, must offer infinite food for the mind, unbounded and inexhaustible discoveries of God. Then I find that, just as fast as my mind unfolds, my delight in the universe increases; new correspondences are revealed between the inward and the outward world; a new light beams from the creation; a more thrilling voice comes from it. I cannot endure the thought of being severed from this harmonious and glorious universe. I expect death to multiply my connections with it." It is interesting to find this man, to whom the satisfactions of the moral life were almost unexampled in his generation, demanding something more than this for his immortal food, — demanding "an increasing variety of exquisite *sensations*," together with the larger mind, the loftier conscience, and the deeper heart.

I must again remind you that Channing's thought must not be taken as a measure of the average Unitarian thinking of his time. It was far more liberal than that, far more interior and spiritual. There were those who feared his liberality, his inwardness, his spirituality. They thought he did not make enough of the outward things,— the miracles, the authority of the Bible and Jesus and the Church. Strangely enough, the lineal descendants of these very men have vaunted themselves as Channing Unitarians, while differing from him in their temper and their spirit as cold from heat and darkness from the light. The average Unitarian of Channing's time laid much more stress than he did on the resurrection of Jesus as a proof of immortality. He

depreciated all those intellectual and moral and emotional arguments for it of which Channing thought so much. And just as the anti-slavery movement after 1830 intensified the pro-slavery spirit, so the Transcendental movement, nearly contemporaneous, intensified the spirit of reliance upon supernatural authority. Without the resurrection of Jesus, it was insisted, we have no evidence for immortality. But the argument was not well thought out. Even if the fact of Jesus' resurrection could be established from a mass of evidence so vague and contradictory as that furnished by the New Testament, if it proved anything concerning the fate of mankind, it would evidently prove too much. For the resurrection of Jesus was a resurrection of the material body, his ascension was an ascension of the material body,— "with his flesh and bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature": so says the English article; and his immortality had the same physical concomitants. What proof is here of our physical resurrection thousands of years hence, or of our immediate immortality in some new investiture in the event of death? Moreover, the resurrection of Jesus (including the ascension) was the crowning act of his miraculous career. As such, what evidence does it furnish for the resurrection or the immortality of those who have no miraculous powers? To be logical in this regard, we must follow Socinus and Priestley, and suppose a miracle for every individual resurrection from the dead. Of this the resurrection of Jesus might be regarded as a sign, but how it could be regarded as a pledge or proof we cannot possibly make out.

When we consider these things, it is at first hard to understand why Dr. Furness, when he published his first studies of the New Testament and the life of Jesus, was received so coldly by the Unitarian conservatives. It is just sixty years since his study of the resurrection appeared in the *Christian Examiner* (January, 1834); and, as he is now ninety-two, he must then have been thirty-two years old. Certainly, no one before had ever done so much to reconcile the differences and contradictions of the gospel histories. Who of us has not been "almost persuaded," as we have read those pages glowing with enthusiasm, so brilliant in their ingenuity that we can easily appreciate how some famous lawyer hailed Dr. Furness as a master in his special craft? Moreover, Dr. Furness's Jesus was a man, and his miracles were hailed as the perfection of his natural manhood. Hence there was soundness in his inference of man's general triumph over death that was wholly wanting to such inference in the opposing camp.

But, if it is hard at first to understand the indifference and coldness of the conservative Unitarians to the young writer's daring thought, it becomes easy after brief consideration. The conservatives were by no means ready to believe that Jesus was a man. They were by no means ready to believe that his "miracles" were effected in an entirely natural manner. If every one of them could thus be saved as *fact*, it would be lost as *supernatural fact;* and it was not the *fact*, but the *supernatural fact* for which they greatly cared, and which they would not let go.

It is true that Dr. Furness urged the *fact* as a sanction of the spiritual authority of Jesus, but what the conservatives wanted was a supernatural authority; and this a natural fact, however wonderful or exceptional, did not secure to them.

Moreover, Dr. Furness was with Channing, and not with the externalists, in his conviction that the resurrection of Jesus was not necessary to establish the immortality of the soul. He had proof enough of that in the soul's "thoughts that wander through eternity," its boundless aspiration for the good and true. It was the moral grandeur of Jesus that confirmed his natural faith. To be sure, the resurrection of Jesus was a resultant of this moral grandeur; and in this way an indirect connection was established between it and the faith in immortality. But *facit per alium facit per se;* and hence the moral grandeur was the corner-stone on which he built, and this did not satisfy the supernaturalist party. There were objections from the opposite extreme,—from those who could not find anything in the general course of life to persuade them that moral excellence, however exalted, entailed superiority to the laws of nature's orderly procedure. In the old Jewish ritual the rule might be, "The priests in the temple profane the law of the temple, and are blameless." It is not so in the ritual of Science. The best men in her temple are the most obedient to her law.

But there was a deeper reason than any we have yet observed why Dr. Furness's naturalism in the third decade of the century was a sign that should

be spoken against. It maximized nature: it minimized the supernatural. That was the method of Emerson's 'Nature' and the 'Divinity School Address.' That was the method of the Transcendentalists generally. Now, for the genuine supernaturalist, the more miracles, the better. Dr. Furness said, The less! The more so-called miracles he could interpret naturally, the better. Thus Jesus did not say: "Peace! Be still!" to the raging sea, but to his scared disciples; and, when their hearts were quieted, the waves did not appall. Here was a tendency which ultimated in the famous South Boston sermon of Theodore Parker in 1841. Even Channing regretted that Parker was so depreciatory of the miracles; but he had little need of them; none whatever to confirm his faith in immortality. He was a thousand times more sure of man's immortal destiny than of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He was conscious of it,—as conscious of it, he declared, as of his own existence. Mankind as such, he said, have an instinct of immortality, an intuition, just as they have an instinct, an intuition, of morality and God. Here was a boldness far in excess of Kant, the great German founder of the Transcendental School. Here was a boldness far in excess of Emerson and Hedge and others of our own Transcendentalists. It may not have been philosophy, but it was magnificent. I do not know where else to go, unless it be to Walt Whitman, for such splendid confidence, such joyous certainty, such absolute assurance of a future life as we find in Theodore Parker. Such confidence, such certainty, could not

but be contagious. Some — the majority — settled back more resolutely than ever into the supernatural position. But many, and for some time a growing company, entered into the sunshine, ardor, glow, of Parker's strong assurance, and became partakers of his joy. That was the golden age of immortality for Unitarians. It was very hard for the conservatives to forgive those who believed so easily, and who believed so much. Here was, indeed, a special revelation vouchsafed to every individual soul. It was strange that Parker should resort to argument to convince men of something they were conscious of, something that they knew by intuition. But he did, and we have his arguments. Some of them are as good to-day as ever. Some of them surprise us by their rendering of facts. We do not find the belief in immortality so universal as he found it. We do not find the desire for it so universal as he found it. There are those who have the belief, but have not the desire. Many a good man would give much to know that he should have his end-all here. But it wasn't Parker's arguments that convinced his hearers and his readers: it was his unwavering confidence that communicated itself to them. Those who were caught up into the sacred fury of that confidence, but who have since felt themselves obliged to forego its passion of heroic affirmation and divine content, can never go back with memory to the departed days without a pang of sorrow and regret. Their later way of thought and feeling may be better, but it is not the same. I remember well enough how hard it was for me to give up the super-

naturalist position. Body and soul seemed parting company. But I remember with much sadder self-compassion the agony of mind and heart when I could not maintain any longer the cause of Transcendentalism as formulated by Theodore Parker, or prophesy any more in its name. But from out the darkness there came hands that plucked me out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock; and I found a new song in my mouth.

It was the development of the scientific spirit that made such a change come o'er the spirit of our dream. This development made the supernaturalist's position more untenable than ever. It brought to the criticism of the New Testament a more searching light, and demonstrated how irrational and immoral it would be to accept as something actual an event so much at variance with the habitual course of things as the resurrection of Jesus upon evidence so contradictory and uncertain. Here was no longer any talk of the impossibility of miracles. The method of science is to accept anything, no matter how wonderful it may be, upon sufficient evidence; but it knows not the supernatural. Given a fact, and it must have its law, though we should have to wait for its discovery a thousand years. But the method of science was hardly less fatal to the certainties of Transcendental metaphysic than to those of supernaturalist theology. Resolving the various instincts of the animal and human world into the products of experience transmitted by heredity, it proposed to do as much for the instincts or intuitions of morals and religion, to seek their origin and

trace their growth, and see if these were such as to justify them in the court of reason, tried by a judge and jury not to be swayed by any solicitation of affection to the one side or the other. You will see what a tremendous difference it made. Those outgivings of the mind called consciousness and intuition, which the Transcendentalist had accepted as ultimate realities, indivisible units of thought, and as the very impress of God's mind upon our own, must now give an account of themselves, and show reason why they should be accorded those seignorial rights which had been heretofore accorded them. How Parker would have met the challenge we shall never know. He died before the battle had been fairly joined, laying down the pen which had been a battle-axe and sword and spear in the same year that Darwin's 'Origin of Species' tacitly demanded a revision of the whole range of those moral and religious ideas which, like animal and vegetable species, had been regarded as special creations of the Deity.

I think I am not wrong in my imagination that for many Unitarians of the more thoughtful kind there was a period of thick darkness somewhere along from 1860 to 1880, sooner or later as the individual was quick or slow to recognize the force of the scientific criticism on both the supernaturalist and the Transcendentalist positions. There were some who never recognized the force of that criticism, and these went on their way rejoicing. There were others who, intellectually accepting the result of science, could not resist the habit of high hope and blessed confidence which so long had etched

and moulded in their minds. Here and there a man settled down doggedly to his work, resolved to preach only what he honestly believed and had reason for believing, and was sometimes surprised to find how much it was. Gradually there came the consciousness that, if science had no warrant for the belief in immortality, neither had it any countermand of the belief. It was, then, permitted us to hope; and we made the most of that. The hope was certainly a noble and exalting one, whatever those might say who too exclusively regarded certain of its baser manifestations. The next step was to the conclusion that it was a reasonable hope,— a long step, and involving many impulses co-operative to a single end. Some of these were intellectual, some emotional, some moral.

Of the first sort was that derived from the quick, sharp, absolute collapse of the materialistic rendering of the world with its depressing maxims, "Thought is a secretion of the brain," and "The brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." There was something almost comical in the suddenness of the collapse. It was like the breaking of a bubble that Herr Büchner had blown up to a portentous size. When the more thoughtful saw how little there was in it, they wondered that they had been so terribly scared. But the materialistic set had made great noise and shouting, and we thought them the vanguard of an army when they were but an awkward squad. Materialism was found to be "the explanation of a world of which we know something" — the world of mind — "by a world of

which we know absolutely nothing," the world of matter. Science and philosophy came at once to this conclusion. But here was only negative help. And the same is true of the collapse of that lovely vision which we once enjoyed of humanity upon the earth advancing endlessly to an ever-greatening, never absolute, perfection. Here was a substitute for immortality which a good many thought would answer all the better purposes of the original article. Then came the astronomer, and told us that one incident of evolution would be the destruction of the earth and the solar system and the resolution of all the starry heavens into a fiery mist, much the same as that from which the process originally set out,— a consummation very much like Omar Khayyám's — "The phantom Caravan has reached the Nothing it set out from." Certainly there was nothing here of positive evidence for human immortality. But such a consummation made the hope of an immortal life more necessary than it had ever been before, necessary for God as well as man. We could almost forget ourselves in pitying him if such a thing could be, and leave no universe of souls whose immortality would justify the course of astronomic time, and the final resolution of all stars that shine into a homogeneous cloud. I may be reminded that the catastrophe which will extinguish our own planet is a great way off, to say nothing of the general collapse. That does not help the moral situation. The higher the perfection which humanity attains, the more pitiful the tragedy which makes all that perfection as if it had never been.

If so far our help is only negative, there is some positive help in the scientific doctrine of the persistency of force. For all the forces that we know, the most efficient, the most wonderful, is that of conscious personality. This harnesses the steam and lightning to its triumphant car. But how much of all the force which Wellington or any other great one "made his own being here," persisted, was conserved, if their souls perished when we gave their dust to dust? Nay, but we do not have to state our problem in terms of human greatness, to bring it home with an impressive gesture to our minds and hearts. How much of the force that made your own father, mother, here; your own husband, wife; your own precious child; your own comrade, teacher, friend, persists and is conserved, if there is no

> "hope of answer or redress,
> Behind the veil, behind the veil"?

There is further scientific help, not negative, but positive, in that doctrine of correlated growth which plays such a conspicuous part in the biology of Darwin and other thinkers of his school. It is the doctrine that in animal structures there goes along with the development of special organs, parts, and functions, the development of certain others. Now in the spiritual life of man there goes along with all that is best in his intelligence, noblest in his affection, grandest and sweetest in his moral life, when all these are working normally, the development of the hope of an immortal life. Here is a correlated growth; and, if the hope that is thus developed is

not a valid one, if it is not a solemn and majestic portent of a divine reality that we can trust with calm assurance, then have we a radical contradiction set in our moral nature,— a contradiction that becomes more obvious and revolting with every higher thought and nobler act and purer purpose of our lives. Can this be possible? Not unless Nature's house is divided against itself, the spiritual against the material, the latter subject to the more rational and benignant sway. Men said of old, "It is impossible for God to lie"; and, unless that doctrine must be given up, we are obliged to think that the same Power that organizes in us the purest splendors of our thought and love, and organizes in us the correlated hope of an immortal life, will see to it that the hope thus organized is not in vain.

There is still further scientific help in the Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest. I know that by "the fittest" here is meant the fittest, that is, the ablest, to survive. But, once the human stage is reached, it means much more than this. The fittest means the best. And what is the fittest in this ideal sense? Shall we say truth, beauty, goodness? But no one denies that these survive, and that their music is the gladness of the world. But these are not the fittest; these are not the best. The fittest and the best is the living personality which delights in these and from which these proceed. We may not say with a great authority in science, "Without spirit-immortality the cosmos has no meaning;" but we must say that, so far as we can see, the meaning it would have *with* this is to the meaning it would

have *without* it as morning to the morning star. And it is the part of modesty and wisdom to doubt if we can think a better thing than God. In the same direction works that subtlety of matter which has been brought home to us by all the later course of science and the increasing wonderfulness of scientific knowledge. Henceforth nothing is too wonderful to be true. The more truly wonderful, the likelier the truth.

Such are a few considerations drawn from the scientific aspect of the world that lend themselves with either negative or positive force to the confirmation of our immortal hope. They have left the old sources from which the hope has fed itself for centuries flowing with unabated energy. These are the craving of the mind for knowledge, the craving of the heart for love, the craving of the moral will for a more absolute conquest of its low ambitions and its base desires. Never have the realms of knowledge been so much enlarged as in these later years, but with the better food the appetite has been increased. We will not speak of the indignity that is done us if from the heights that we have won we are cast down into a cavernous abyss of absolute blindness and nonentity. It is a horrid thought; but as I would rather be the growing vine or tree than the cold sod from which it springs, as I would rather be a conscious animal than the growing vine or tree, so I would rather be a man with knowledge, conscience, and affection than animal or tree or clod, no matter what impends. Happy the days between the unconscious nights, and happy life between the silences

before and after, even if there be no more! But to have some liberal knowledge of the universe, to have some manful struggle with besetting sins, to have our nearest and our dearest taken from our sight, and not desire with strong desire some great renewal of our life, some opportunity for wider knowledge, more dutiful observance, and more satisfying love, this would not so much argue a noble stoicism or a divine unselfishness as some poverty of nature, some paralysis of will, some deadness of the heart.

The old incitements and the new have wrought together during the last five-and-twenty years to make the Unitarian hope of immortality more strong and brave, and to give it a more rational character. This is, of course, a matter of personal impression, and the inference may not be warranted by the collective facts; but that the tendency of the more thoughtful minds has been of late towards immortality, and not away from it, there can be little doubt. It has been so in other circles as well as in our own. It is not many years since Dr. Felix Adler preached a sermon here in our church in which he assailed the doctrine of immortality, not only as an irrational doctrine, but as one utterly selfish and demoralizing, a stumbling-block in the path of righteousness. Some of you have read the report of his discourse on Easter Day, a week ago, which has since appeared with every mark of an authoritative presentation. It was very different from the sermon which you and I remember him as preaching here. He insisted in this last discourse with great force and eloquence on the moral excellence and beauty of the hope of im-

mortality, and claimed for it a rational consistency with the great laws that dominate our human life. He was not shuffling, as many do, and talking of immortality, while meaning a perpetuity of social influence, like that of George Eliot's "choir invisible." He did full justice to that glorious thought, but said that it was not enough; that reason, heart, and conscience must have more. This utterance, coming from a thinker so profound and serious as Dr. Adler, from a man so perfectly sincere, had more than a mere personal significance. It was a sign of the times. It was one shining crest of a great tide that is making in, and freshening a strand that has not, for many a day, known anything so sweet and good.

There are other changes that have from time to time affected more or less seriously the Unitarian doctrine of a future life. One of these relates to the doctrine of future punishment. There is reason to believe that until quite recently the Unitarian belief upon this head was that of other Christians. The latest editors of the Racovian Catechism, which is an admirable exposition of the Socinian doctrine, rejected as "a mere calumny" the idea that Socinians did not accept the dogma of eternal punishment. But, in truth, Socinus himself has been thought to imply the annihilation of the wicked; and the Racovian Catechism is commendably silent with regard to a matter of which the Calvinists had much to say. So far as I can make out, even while the doctrine was formally accepted, it was very generally allowed to remain in harmless desuetude by the majority of Unitarian preachers and writers. In

England these had generally discarded it for a doctrine of universal restoration. In America, where the progress of theology has always been at a slower rate than in England, the ancient doctrine had a firmer grip upon the Unitarian mind; and this was tightened by the anxiety of many not to be confounded with the Universalists, who were doing violence to the kingdom of universal salvation, and taking it by force. That Channing took no pains to correct those who charged him with Universalist opinions is evidence that he was at least more in sympathy with them than with the Calvinistic. But others were more cautious or less brave. There was, I fear, a good deal of intellectual and social cowardice involved, a good deal of shameful silence and of verbal ingenuity, if haply the reproach of believing such good things of God as those of the Universalists might not come upon the Unitarians or be taken away. In truth there was among Unitarians little disposition to accept Hosea Ballou's doctrine of death's magical operation, the sinners all becoming saints *in articulo mortis*. The probation doctrine was hardly more attractive to the saner minds. The God would be a devil who should give men but seventy or eighty years, at the longest, and on the average not half of that, to determine their eternal good or ill. The tendency was clear from Channing down to a belief that we begin another life where we leave off in this, and work out our salvation there, "hope-lifted, doubt-depressed," as we do here, it may be finding the new circumstances more favorable to our good endeavor than the old. For

these things we must wait, and also for the right answer to that deepest question of the heart, Will there be mutual recognition in another world on the part of those who have been friends in this? Yes, I should say, if there we are to know ourselves.

> "Were it not thus, O God of our salvation,
> Many would curse to thee, and I for one;
> Fling thee thy bliss, and snatch at thy damnation,
> Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun."

That is the first impulsive thought; but there is a better in the great words of Emerson, serene and calm, "Shall not the heart which has received so much trust the power by which it lives?" Yea, though our hope were wholly vain, would it not still be possible to keep our hearts in perfect peace because they are stayed on Him? This is the highest faith. We ask for nothing that his wisdom cannot freely give. Secure of this, we sail on an unerring course, by an unfailing star.

> "If our bark sinks, 'tis to another sea."

VIII.

THE GREAT SALVATION.

The understanding of beliefs cherished nearly two thousand years ago is attended with great difficulties. If our English words were the exact equivalents of the New Testament Greek,—as they are not in many instances,—it would still be difficult and sometimes impossible to know exactly what the New Testament writers thought, what words suggest at any time is so much more significant than what they formally denote. The modern theological scheme of salvation is honestly believed by the majority of Christian people to have been that of all the centuries from our own to that of Jesus, and as honestly it is conceived by the majority to be clearly set forth in the New Testament. But nothing is surer than that, could Jesus have encountered it, he would have said, "Depart from me! I never knew you," and that Paul, from whose language it has been deduced for the most part, would have imagined it some kind of "speaking with tongues," much needing an interpreter. The supposed resemblance between Paul's thought and Calvin's, for example, is largely due to the carrying back of Calvin's thought, and putting it into Paul's. Much has been made of the relation of Paul's doctrine to the Old Testament doctrine

of sacrifice; but now it looks very much as if that Old Testament doctrine had been radically distorted by the stress upon it of the substitutionary doctrine of the atonement, which before the eleventh century had no recognition in the Christian Church.

Out of the haze and dimness that pertain to things so far away there gradually emerges the conviction that within the limits of the New Testament we have at least three different representations of "the saving work of Christ." The earliest of these is that of the Synoptic Gospels; and it may safely be regarded as substantially the representation of the first Christian Unitarians, the first followers of Jesus. It is rather a collective and national than an individualist representation. It is best understood by comparing it with the teachings of the Hebrew prophets. It was a continuation of that teaching, "Salvation is of the Jews." But not to these even without swift repentance; for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. "There is here," as Martineau has said, "no magic office needing an agent superhuman or divine." As the last of the prophets, or the great herald of the Messianic kingdom, or as the Messianic king, there was no suggestion in the function of Jesus of a superhuman character. If it was borne in upon him that he "must suffer many things," and this feeling, as seems highly probable, was shaped upon the conception of the suffering Servant of Jehovah in the fifty-third chapter of 'Isaiah,' we have no suggestion here of suffering that paid the sinner's debt, and made his record clean. Moreover, it was left for Jesus to identify the suffering Servant with

the Messiah. He is not the Messiah in the Old Testament connection, and he was not interpreted Messianically before the time of Jesus.

The death of Jesus, so conspicuous in the traditional scheme of salvation, was thrust upon him as a necessity of his position, and was for him and his disciples the harbinger of his return to conquer and to reign. Here, again, the influence of 'Isaiah' liii. seems evident. But the passages are so few which ascribe to his death any sacrificial character that it is natural, if not necessary, to suppose that they are the reflections backward of the Pauline theology upon his simpler speech. If his atoning blood had any such place in his thought as it has in the popular theology, his silence about it is astonishing. In the various accounts of his crucifixion we have not a hint of anything sacrificial. Each is the story of a martyrdom.

We have, then, for our first conception of the great salvation, the salvation of the countrymen of Jesus from their sins, through genuine repentance following upon his teachings, making them worthy to become partakers of that kingdom of heaven which he and they fondly believed was very near at hand. Next we have the conception of Saint Paul. It offers many difficulties, and sublime must be their self-confidence who can reconcile them all in a coherent view that allows to every part its proper force. But it has, I think, been shown abundantly that, seeking the most salient and distinctive element of Paul's doctrine of salvation, we find it in the 'Epistle to the Galatians': "Christ redeemed us

from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed be every one that hangs on a tree." As Jew or Christian, Paul's religious feeling was equally intense. He hated the Christians; and he persecuted them because they dared to hail as the Messiah a man whom the law, by crucifying him, had made a thing accursed. But there came a day when the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah was borne in upon his mind with irresistible and startling force. It was the day when those who had half-stripped themselves for the stoning of Stephen laid their garments at his feet. For all his intellectual force, Paul was pre-eminently a man of moral sensibility, and something in the dying face of Stephen so lingered in his memory that, shortly after, it was, as it were, projected on the sky, became the face of Jesus, and a voice, as if from heaven, cried, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" We speak of this event as his conversion, but it was only a small part of it. The dying face of Stephen was much more than this, a cause producing this effect. Another was the argument, "If Jesus *was* the Messiah, then the law in cursing him was self-abolished." Was he the Messiah? He was proved so by his resurrection from the dead. What was Paul's argument for this. Evidently, that Stephen's calm assurance of it must have been well founded for him to die so well. And thus for Paul Christ's death *and resurrection* made every Christian free from the Jewish ritual and moral law, while they opened wide the gates for all, both Jews and Gentiles, who would make the spirit of Jesus their own,

to find a joy and peace which the old law could never give. Let a man do his best, and how could he discern his errors and cleanse himself from secret faults? But let his heart be full of love, and he could trust himself to do right in the main, and trust to God's forgiveness for the rest.

This, so far as I can well make out, was Paul's doctrine of salvation. The death of Christ had no such part in it as in the popular theology. It would have been wholly ineffectual without his resurrection and the curse of the law on him who had been crucified. It would have been wholly ineffectual, even with these adjuncts, without the spirit of Jesus in the believer's mind and heart. "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." This, I take it, is the key-note of Paul's doctrine of the great spiritual salvation. The death and resurrection of Jesus effected nothing but the abolition of the law. But Christ formed in men was the hope of glory. It must be confessed that Paul's argument for the abolition of the law is frightfully unreal to us. It was not so to him. But there is nothing unreal for us in his doctrine of a true spiritual salvation through sympathetic appropriation of the spirit that was in Jesus.*

Whatever the immediate impression made by Paul, we have ample evidence that it was not continuous and progressive. But for the heretics who took his writings into their keeping, they would probably

*This whole matter is worked out beautifully by Professor C. C. Everett in his 'Gospel of Paul.' See also Pfleiderer's 'Paulinismus' and Baur's 'Paul's Life and Works.'

never have come down to us. In the second century the author of the Fourth Gospel, whom we cannot identify, developed his theory of "the work of Christ" as freely as if Paul had never written a line; and he developed it in such a fashion that, if the later Christendom had gone to him for its doctrine of salvation, it would have been wholly different from that which is familiar to our minds. So long as he remained with his disciples, the ministry of Jesus had a much narrower range in the Fourth Gospel than in the Synoptics. There it was for the Jewish nation, here for those separated from the world. For these only would he pray. "I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me; for they are thine." Even his death is sometimes represented as being only for the inner circle: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life *for his friends*." What, not if he lay it down for his enemies? Happily, the writer had this better thought: "If I be lifted up from the earth, *I will draw all men unto me*." His death would have a double operation. Crowned by his resurrection, it would flash the glory of the manifested Father into all human hearts; and it would enable Jesus, who could not remain indefinitely on the earth, to send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Comforter, to be with his disciples always, and with them who should believe on him through their word.

But this mystical interpretation was not any more than Paul's to be the doctrine that would finally prevail, and hold its own against all comers for a thousand years. It was too mystical by far, as Paul's was

too complicated and obscure. Nevertheless, the doctrine that finally triumphed may have found its point of departure in the Fourth Gospel. It certainly did not find it in Paul, who had no devil to speak of, and no hell. But the Fourth Gospel is as full of the devil as the Zoroastrian theology; and the dramatic interest of that document inheres in the thwarting of the "power of darkness," "the prince of this world," the devil, by the power of God manifested in Jesus. But the New Testament had other hints of the coming doctrine, the most concrete in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "That through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, namely, the devil." Martineau's statement of the new doctrine is so good that I will give it in his words: "The Devil, as Prince of the realm of evil and death, had acquired by the transgression of Adam, and the sinfulness of his children, a legal right to have the souls of men for his own world. But his right was contingent on the sinfulness of humanity; and the moment he laid his hand upon the sinless Christ, and seized him for the shades below, he overstepped his prerogative, and forfeited his right by usurpation. Two things, therefore, ensued: having clutched an immortal victim, he could not hold him from passing into heaven and touching the earth by resurrection on the way; and, having sacrilegiously robbed the treasure-house of divine life, he was condemned to make reparation by signing a release for the whole brotherhood of Christ." If there is any trouble with this statement of Martineau's, it is that the dignity of the language lends a dignity to the con-

ception which does not belong to it. As stated by the early fathers and the later doctors of the Church, it sounds much less impressive. Thus Peter Lombard tells us that Christ set his cross as a trap for the devil, and baited it with his blood. Saint Augustine admired the justice of the thing, and urged men to profit by its good example. But Gregory of Nyssa, on the contrary, admired the cheat, and said it served the devil right for cheating our first parents so in Paradise. Christ put on "the guise of sinful flesh" on purpose to deceive the devil, and, remaining in Hades for thirty-six hours, rescued from thence an innumerable company of saints for all eternity.

It is to the time that fashioned such opinions, so utterly monstrous and absurd, that great scholars and thinkers, like Cardinal Newman, turn their asking eyes for spiritual enlightenment. For some centuries they were the opinions of both Unitarians and Trinitarians, as these struggled for the supremacy of the growing Church. It was not until the eleventh century that Anselm, substituting the "justice of God" for the devil, brought the doctrine of the atonement into that shape of which every subsequent development within orthodox limits has been a modification. "Resolving the whole transaction," as Martineau has written, "into a juggle between conflicting attributes of the infinite perfection," Anselm "did but replace a childish forensic fiction by a monstrous moral enormity." His book was called *Cur Deus Homo*,—'Why God was made Man.' Why? His answer is, To furnish a satis-

faction for sin that would satisfy the justice of God in forgiving it. Better the universe should perish than that man should sin. Therefore, the satisfaction must be worth more than the universe. No man's life is that. Only God's can be. But it is man that owes the satisfaction which only God can pay. And hence God was made man. But why not God the Father? Because that would have made two grandchildren in the Trinity. The Father would have been the grandchild of Mary's parents, and the Son would have been Mary's. Why two grandchildren would have been an extravagant number we are not informed. There is more of the same sort, but I forbear. Why do I even mention it? Because Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is the most influential book that has ever been injected into the docrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. But, influential as it was, it did not at once displace the doctrine of the outwitted devil; nor did it clearly express the doctrine of penal substitution which is commonly attributed to it. But this was sure to come upon its heels; and in Luther we have it in full swing: "God sent his only Son into the world, threw upon him the sins of all men, and thus spoke to him, Be thou Peter who denied, Paul who persecuted, blasphemed, and used all violence, David who committed adultery, also the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise, the murderer who hung upon the cross,— in a word, thou shalt be what all men are, as if thou hadst committed the sins of all men."

And now the rebirth of Unitarianism was not far away. Luther had thirteen years to live and injure

his own work when Servetus published his 'False Views of the Trinity' in 1533. And Servetus wrote, "To save is to make whole, to heal those who are sick." He had praise for good works, which to Luther must have been abhorrent. Even the justified had need of them. But it was reserved for the Socini, uncle and nephew, to bring to the doctrine of Anselm and its subsequent developments a criticism that was at once bold and masterly. It reversed the order of ideas, contending that the reconciling work of Christ was that of reconciling men to God, and not God to men. And men were reconciled to God by the teachings and example of Jesus, confirmed by his heroic death and by his glorious resurrection. It is not the death, it is the life, of Jesus that is the saving power. His death was but the climax of a life of pure unselfishness. There is a "sweet reasonableness" in the Racovian Catechism (1609), our best expression of the Socinian doctrine, which is in happy and refreshing contrast with such doctrines as those that we have been considering. Christ, we are told, has two ways of saving us. "First, he inspires us with a certain hope of salvation, and also incites us both to enter on the way of salvation and to persevere in it. In the next place, he is with us in every struggle and temptation, suffering or danger, affords us assistance, and at length delivers us from eternal death." "It was," the Catechism continues, "exceedingly conducive to both these methods of saving us that Christ, our Captain, should not enter upon his eternal life and glory otherwise than through sufferings and through a

death of this kind. For, as to the former, since we perceive in his case that the termination of that way which seemed to lead to destruction is so happy, following our leader with the utmost firmness, we enter this way, and persevere in it, with the certain hope that the same end remains for us also; and, as to the latter, since having himself experienced how heavy and of themselves intolerable to human nature such trials are, and being not ignorant of sufferings, he might learn to succor the distressed." There is a touch of real humanity in this which warms our hearts where Anselm left them like a frozen stone.

It was characteristic of the Socini to appeal to Scripture, where Anselm had spun his doctrine almost entirely out of his own inner consciousness. A return upon Scripture was one of the most characteristic aspects of Socinian Unitarianism. Wonderful was the ingenuity with which the most different and contradictory texts were made to yield a similar or identical meaning. Just as I was writing this, there came to me a book-agent with a book on the Millennium, in which there was a chart which, he said, harmonized every text from 'Genesis' to 'Revelation' and all the doctrines of the different sects; and I wondered if it was any more ingenious than the Socinian catechism. But Socinianism was not more Scriptural than rational; and on its rational side it demanded how, unless man were infinite, he could sin to an infinite degree, and how, unless God died, there was an infinite atonement. There came a lawyer to the rescue, the great Grotius, with the shrewd suggestion that it was not necessary for Jesus

to "pay it all," the whole debt of human wickedness. It was only necessary that God should accept the sufferings and death of Jesus as a full satisfaction. When the Socinian flank was thus adroitly turned, there was great rejoicing in the orthodox camp; but the victory was a complete surrender of the doctrine of Anselm that the divine justice must be satisfied. Justice is not satisfied when a creditor takes a part of his debt for the whole. It is mercy that does that.

From the time of Grotius until now there have been almost as many different orthodox theories of the atonement as there have been orthodox theologians of intellectual force and genius. Our own century has been extremely fertile in new renderings, Taylor and Bushnell and others making their several departures from the doctrine of Grotius or Anselm, as Campbell was doing in Scotland, and Dorner in Germany. One of the latest of these departures is Socinian in all but name. It argues that a man is only justified when he is just. The prophet Habbakuk knew as much as that when he said, "The just shall live by their faithfulness," which Paul misquoted thus, "The just shall live by faith"; and Luther made that misquotation the chief corner-stone of his great doctrine of justification by faith alone.

English Unitarianism in its earlier stages was, as we have before seen, very generally Socinian; and in no respect was it so more consistently than in its doctrines of atonement and salvation. The emphasis was on the life of Jesus, not upon his death. To reconcile men to God, not to reconcile God to men,

was the purpose of his life and teaching. His teaching and example were the realities to which men must look for help and healing, not his death and resurrection. These were the signs and sanctions of his prophetic office and his kingly rule. American Unitarianism in its earlier stages advanced on parallel lines. Although generally, here, the Arian view of Christ prevailed over the Socinian, this did not mean, so far as I have yet been able to discover, any doctrine of the atoning work of Jesus more sympathetic with the orthodox tradition than with the Socinian. The moral energy and opposition of our early Unitarianism was aroused much more by the Calvinistic doctrines of vicarious atonement, total depravity, and predestination than by the doctrine of the Trinity considered by itself. Negative it was not. But it could not affirm our moral freedom without denying predestination. It could not affirm the dignity of human nature without denying total depravity. It could not affirm God's infinite perfection and keep any terms whatever with the doctrine that the blood of Christ flowed to appease the wrath of God, that all men's sins and their punishment were heaped upon the innocent Jesus, that the mercy of God was purchased by the voluntary death of his beloved Son. If the ideas of moral freedom, the dignity of human nature, and the infinite perfection of God are negative ideas, then were the doctrines of our early Unitarians "pale negations," but not otherwise. Every affirmation is at the same time a denial. If you affirm a thing is round, you deny that it is square. If you affirm that it is white,

you deny that it is black. If you affirm that it is sweet, you deny that it is sour. The question between the early Unitarians and their opponents is, Which denied and which affirmed the greater, better things? Is predestination greater and better than moral freedom, total depravity greater and better than the dignity of human nature, a God of wrath and vengeance greater and better than a God of infinite perfection? It was largely, if not mainly, because of the evil associations of the doctrine of the Trinity with the doctrines peculiarly Calvinistic that it was intolerable to Channing and his Unitarian contemporaries. The most offensive words that Channing ever spoke were those of his New York dedication sermon of 1826, in which he charged the orthodox doctrine with setting forth "that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity." But this representation of the atonement was very mild and gracious in comparison with thousands made by orthodox scholars and popular preachers in Channing's time. The word "gallows" was, I believe, particularly offensive. But it was merely a translation of "the offence of the cross" into the New England vernacular. The symbolic use of the cross in churches, the wearing of it as an ornament upon gentle bosoms, had robbed it of its original significance. Crucifixion was not more refined and elegant than hanging. It was the most cruel and degrading kind of execution. If hanging

had been considered more cruel and degrading, Jesus would certainly have been hanged.

Has our Unitarian way of thinking about these things remained substantially the same as it was when the great soul of Channing was housed in his frail body? Yes, in its heart of hearts. For there it was and is that the atonement, the at-one-ment, between God and man is a matter of personal righteousness. And there it was, and is, secondarily, that it is not to the death, but to the life, of Jesus that we must go for the best moral help that he affords; to his teachings and example, not to his broken limbs and wounded side. But with this community of thought between the earliest and latest decades of the century there is also a great deal of difference.

All the resources of Parker's manly wit and his immeasurable scorn were drawn upon to show forth the vicarious system in all the absurdity of its intellectual contradictions and all the enormity of its impeachment of the Eternal Goodness, the Almighty Love. But it is not to this aspect of his prophecy that we go for that in it which was most significant and impressive. For this was the sincerity and boldness with which he went about to rescue Jesus from the singularity, the isolation, in which he still remained after the earlier Unitarians had said their bravest word and done their most emancipating work. These had their "scheme of salvation" quite as obviously as the Calvinistic party. It was a different scheme; but it was still a scheme, something formal, artificial, and mechanical,— not an illustration of the unswerving laws and the abiding forces

of the moral and spiritual world. According to this scheme Jesus was *sent* into the world. He was an ambassador accredited from God to men. His credentials were his miracles: those of which he was the object, his miraculous birth and resurrection; and those of which he was the subject, those which he wrought. Theodore Parker saw very clearly how formal, artificial, and mechanical all this was; and he swept it all aside. So doing, he aroused great opposition, in which his Unitarian brethren took a leading part. But his thought is now the common thought of Unitarians. Many survivals of the old theological mechanics linger in the speech of men, who, whatever they may have a conscience for, have not a conscience for the sincerest possible use of words. But what Emerson meant when he said, "The soul knows no persons," is now the general creed of Unitarian sincerity. For, of course, he did not mean that the soul is indifferent to personal greatness or goodness. Are not his essays starred all over with the names of

> "Our loftier brothers, but one in blood"?

What he meant was that the spiritual laws recognize no isolated and exceptional persons, that they are always and everywhere the same, and that the best that Jesus or any other person can do for us is to furnish us with an illustration of these laws,— how they lift up the faithful and how they smite the wicked down.

To find in Jesus frankly and unreservedly a man among men is not to question his moral and spiritual

pre-eminence. Still less is it to question the concurrence of events which made his personality and teaching central to the great tides of human history. But is it not to diminish the force of his teaching and example? Many will think so; but others are perfectly assured that he needs no artificial prop, no arbitrary isolation; that he can be safely trusted to the great universal brotherhood of souls; that, so trusted, his appeal to what is best in us will be more vital and impressive than it has been heretofore.

The relation of Jesus to that salvation by character, which for the modern Unitarian is the only great salvation, has in some other respects been profoundly affected by the continuous study of the New Testament simultaneously with the study of our personal and social needs and duties and responsibilities. In the teachings of Jesus the universal element is large. The texts, the parables, are many that speak straight to our consciences, our hearts, comforting us in our sorrow, convicting us of sin, encouraging our tried and tempted wills. But there are many others which are local and temporal to a greater or less degree. The expectation of a great social catastrophe had an enormous bias on the ethics of Jesus. His doctrine of marriage was ascetic, his doctrine of property was communistic, his doctrine of charity was sentimental, his doctrine of non-resistance was such as commends itself to Tolstoi, but not to many others in our time. With the example of Jesus it is much the same as with his teachings. Followed unreservedly, would it not justify those who say, "The hope of the race is in

its extinction," and bring all our joys and sorrows to a sudden end? Moreover, conduct and circumstances go together; and our circumstances are inevitably so different from those of Jesus that his special actions very seldom furnish us with the light and leading necessary for us to tread with confidence a dark and dangerous way. But, while conscious of his limitations as a teacher and exemplar to a degree formerly inconceivable, the modern Unitarian does not feel that Jesus represents for him a moral help, a spiritual reality, unworthy to be named beside the conceptions of him cherished by the fathers of the faith. "The spirit giveth life"; and the spirit of Jesus has not suffered any least abatement, any slightest obscuration, from the criticism of the New Testament bearing upon his precepts and example, and suggesting their inadequacy to the exigencies of our modern life. Rather by this criticism has it been set free to work upon our lives with a more vital efficacy than before. And what was the spirit that was in him? It was the spirit of trust towards God and love towards man, of compassion for the sinful and the suffering, of kindness to the miserable and weak, of inwardness in conduct, rightness of the heart. It is not to be conceived that a time will ever come when this spirit will not appeal to what is best in man. If there should ever come a time when this spirit covers the earth as the waters cover the depths of the sea, the name of Jesus will then stand among the highest on the roll of those whose blameless lives revealed it in an evil time, far off in some dim morning of the early world.

That the Bible contains "all things that are necessary to salvation" is one of the most liberal statements of the English articles, one that has made it easier for many liberal Episcopalians to establish for themselves a *modus vivendi* in the Church of their baptism or their thoughtless youth. And certainly for those who go to the Bible, not with the hope or the determination of forcing from it a consistent body of doctrine, but with the resolve to take the sweetest and the best, and let the other go, it contains a wonderful amount of moral and religious help and inspiration. The life and death, the teachings and example, and, above all, the spirit of Jesus are only a part, although the greatest, of the large and splendid whole. For in the New Testament we have not only Jesus, but Paul, and besides the New Testament we have the Old; and in that we have, within the compass of the 'Psalms,' chords that vibrate in unison with almost every possible joy or sorrow of the private heart, and, within the compass of the Prophets, we have, as nowhere else in literature, the passion of the patriot mind. Then, too, in 'Job,' incomparably grand, we have the one great protest of the centuries against the measurement of God's goodness or man's righteousness by the standards of an outward, visible success. We are still far from exhausting the riches of "the Bible old"; but, if we had done so, we should find that for our latest Unitarian mind there is a conception of the great salvation which does not find all things necessary to it within the Bible's glorious range. For this conception is of a salvation of the whole man

now and here, and not merely of his soul from the impending horrors of a future state. It is a conception of salvation which does not find so much in lost souls as in wasted lives the misery to be escaped. The great salvation! It is man's complete possession and enjoyment of his various powers in their full scope, each mutually sustaining and sustained, and the use of these in furtherance of a present social good and an immortal destiny.

It is first of all, then, a salvation of the body; and we have here something that is worth saving. Paul knew or thought he knew that in his flesh dwelt no good thing; but he was much mistaken. How much wiser was the Old Testament psalmist, who found himself curiously and wonderfully made! *How* curiously and wonderfully we know, as he could not, thanks to the revelations of the chemist, the anatomist, the biologist, and the physiologist of the modern world. But not only wonder dwells in it, but also beauty; more than in any other object under the heaven's cope; and not only wonder and beauty, but also joy. It is the avenue through which the outward universe streams in upon the mind, and bathes the heart with a most pure delight. It is the fountain of life, safe in whose keeping are the unfailing generations of the world. Certainly, we might have a great salvation without the salvation of the body, but not the greatest nor the best. This, however, is something that our churches do not meddle with at all, and our schools not overmuch. But the boy or girl who cannot ride and swim is more imperfectly educated than the boy or

girl who, able in these things, is lacking in "small Latin and less Greek"; and it is not as if the body's powers and graces ended in themselves. They are the stuff out of which intellect is made, and will. To starve the stomach is to starve the brain. Sick bodies mean sick minds. Dr. Johnson may have put the case too strongly when he said, "Every man is a rascal as soon as he is sick." We often hear and know of men and women who somehow do contrive to make stepping-stones of their sick and dying selves to higher things. But that, in the main, good health means easier access to all good things of the spirit is sound doctrine; and the great salvation that does not include the element of physical health is not by any means the greatest that can be conceived.

According to the canons of the traditional theology, the intellectual part of man as little comes within the scope of his salvation as the physical part. It is often lumped with that, and called "the carnal mind." The salvation of the traditional theology has been a salvation of the soul, whatever that may be,— some thin, mysterious abstraction,— from some extra-mundane ill. But the great salvation of our modern thought and purpose is, with whatever else, a salvation of the mind, thinking, loving, conversant with beauty, willing justice and beneficence. Time was when such a thing as ethics of the intellect had hardly dawned upon the mind. But the immoral intellect is, perhaps, the most characteristic form of modern immorality; and the preachers and teachers of theology furnish its most striking illus-

trations. It was this fact that made 'Robert Elsmere,' as a novel of theological transition, one of the timeliest novels that was ever written, searching almost as many consciences as 'Romola' with its relentless thrust. One of the deadliest oppositions from which the mind needs saving is that of Biblical theology, which is forever asking, not "What is the simple truth?" but "How can the Bible statement be made to harmonize with science?" The notion that with sufficient ingenuity every part of the Bible can be made to agree with every other has been prolific of enormous intellectual waste. The literature of the Bible, putting aside some of the earliest fragments, covers a period of just about one thousand years' duration, as long as from King Alfred to Queen Victoria. What should we think of the endeavor to make every part of English literature for a thousand years agree with every other? But such an attempt would be hardly more immoral than the attempt to bring the literature of the Bible into one consistent scheme of doctrine made up of mutually consenting parts.

The range of intellect in the Bible is a very narrow range as compared with that of modern science and philosophy and political economy and general literature, in which last our intellectual life finds its most admirable expression. Yet these, too, are necessary to salvation in its broadest sense, more necessary than nine-tenths of the Old Testament and five or six-tenths of the New. But the range of beauty there is even more contracted. It is not wholly absent; for we have something of it in many

psalms, in the Book of 'Ruth,' in 'Job,' in some parts of the Prophets. In the New Testament the parables of Jesus are often full of it, and it touches many passages in the Gospels and Epistles with a fitful gleam. But, surely, all things necessary to the salvation which is beauty are not here. It is to Greece, not to Judea, that we go for this,—to Greece for architecture and sculpture, to Italy for Raphael and his peers, to Holland for Rembrandt, to England for Shakspere, names that are lifted like the highest peaks out of a multitude which hold up to the sun their shining shields, heralds of morning and beautiful with the mystery of the departing days. All these are not too much.* The mind in love with beauty needs them all, to satisfy its thirst and hunger for these perfect things of God.

Surely, the great salvation is none other than the harmonious development of our many-sided life; and, therefore, just as surely the volume that contains all things sufficient for this end is none other than the book of universal life, the total universe of God. We cannot spare a star from out the sky, a crystal from the rocks, a drop of water from the wandering clouds, a ray of the all-conquering sun. We cannot spare a day of the experience of men from the far-off beginning of their upward climb until this present hour. We cannot spare one word of any scripture of whatever nation under heaven, of whatever time, one saint or hero out of whom the holiest books have drained their vital blood. It were a

*So, too, with the affections. Mr. H. T. Finck, a careful and unbiassed student, does not find anywhere in the Bible a suggestion of ideal or romantic love. See his 'Romantic Love and Personal Beauty,' p. 110.

terrible mistake to think that any single book, albeit summing up the various experience of a thousand years, could be sufficient for these things. It were a terrible mistake to think that any life, albeit that of Jesus, so trustful, so compassionate, so tender, and so strong, and set where all the highways of the nations meet and part, could fully answer to our utmost need. Mankind for its salvation needs all the best that science, art, philosophy, religion, literature, and life contain within their boundless scope. It is no definite result. It is no "far-off divine event." It is a process, not a goal.

"Profounder, profounder
Man's spirit must dive;
To his aye-rolling orbit
No goal can arrive.
The heavens that now draw him
With sweetness untold,
Once found,—for new heavens
He spurneth the old."

It is a far cry from the soteriology of Paul or Anselm or Socinus to this which is demanded by the conditions of our modern thought and life. We have here a doctrine which, however we may reverence the man of Nazareth and prize his goodness and his truth, makes it not less than impious to specialize him and isolate him as he has been specialized and isolated in the theology and worship of the Christian Church. "The first born of many brethren"! That he may have been in Joseph's narrow house, from Mary's fertile womb; but in

the countless family of God he was not the first. Millions of brethren had preceded him. But the thought of Christendom has not been faithful even to the Scripture phrase. He has not been "the first born of many brethen": he has been "the only begotten of the Father." To-day our criticism, science, and philosophy welcome him into the largeness of humanity. Within that largeness there is room for all his gifts and graces, all his breadth of spirit, all his height of soul. Let us be patient, let us give him time; and, thus rescued and restored, he shall yet be the object of a more sincere affection and the medium of a more genuine help than ever heretofore in all the years since he went up and down Judea on his errands of good will to men.

Martineau tells us that the salvation of Paul's contemplation was a transaction carried on by God and Christ wholly behind men's backs. They had nothing to do with it. It is very different with the great salvation of our vision, hope, and dream. Here are ten thousand helps of science, literature, and life; here are Bibles and great leaders of religion. But they have no compulsory force. It is for us to say whether they are to be our glory or our shame. It is according to the use we make of them in our daily business, in our domestic cares, in our home duties and affections, in our social relations, in our citizenship, in our most inward life, that they mean much for us or little. When we are told in the New Testament, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do," we seem to have a

piece of contradictory advice. But no! "God cannot make Antonio Stradivari's violins without Antonio."

That is the noblest trust in God,—to trust him in the strength of our own arms, the stubbornness of our own wills, the warmth of our own beating hearts. Then, and then only, is our salvation an accomplished fact when we have masterfully taken to ourselves the countless opportunities and inspirations of the world, and out of them shaped and firmly built together a character of which we have no call to be ashamed in any presence, human or divine.

IX.

LOSS AND GAIN.*

Fifty years ago Channing was less than two years dead; Dewey, well named, forever fresh and sweet, was in the full tide of his New York ministry, writing sermons full of the greatness of men's opportunity and the awfulness of God; Gannett was forty-three, a bush afire with God, not unconsumed; Furness was forty-two, and had published his 'Remarks on the Four Gospels' and his 'Jesus and his Biographers' eight and six years before; Bellows was just thirty (June 11), and had been for six years the minister of that society which was his life-long joy and crown; Hedge, nine years older, was preaching to the lumber merchants of Bangor, and building sentences massive as Doric columns, rich as Corinthian capitals; Theodore Parker, thirty-four years old, was in Europe, resting awhile after his first great battle, and writing Dr. Francis in the Divinity School letters little, if any, shorter than his West Roxbury sermons, at once the insatiable reader, the eager combatant, and the religious soul; James Freeman Clarke, born in the same year with Parker, was drawing nigh to the great heroism of his life,

* An address suggested by the fiftieth anniversary of the Meadville Theological School, and read before the Middle States Conference at Meadville, Pa., June 12, 1894. The concluding part, as here printed, is from an address before the Western Conference May 17, 1893, upon the Unitarian name.

— that exchange with Parker which cost him the secession of fifteen valued members of his church; Emerson, born the year after Furness (1803), was still preaching here and there in Unitarian pulpits as occasion offered, though he had resigned the charge of the Second Church in Boston a dozen years before. But one of these remains with us to-day,— Furness, obedient to the voice at eve, obeyed at prime. Whatever our clear gains, immeasurable the loss of these, and such as these! Of a truth, no man's vacant place is ever filled. New places for new men, and the good work goes on. Does it seem to us that there are none coming up with shoulders broad enough to wear the mantles which the translated ones have left behind? The spirit has its ebb and flow; but to what generation has the real apostolical succession not appeared to fail? What we know is that in 1844 men all unknown — among them Allen, King, Longfellow, Johnson, Frothingham, and Weiss — were standing patiently without, tuning their instruments for a music just as pure and sweet as any that was resonant within or any that had died away. Was Channing's spirit more devout than Potter's, his thought so deep and high, his courage more serene? And we must have a care to notice that not all the work is done, nor the best part of it, by those who are most prominent in the public eye, most welcome to the public ear. Our ordinary standards are as absurd as if we measured the progress of a train or carriage by the rattle of the wheels.

To estimate our loss and gain in these particulars

would be a difficult matter, fraught with invidious comparisons and fruitful of no good result. We mourn the good we miss: we trust we shall not prove unworthy of our sacred trusts. In the mean time how do we stand in point of numbers and efficiency to-day as compared with 1844, and by what processes and ratios have the old facts and figures been transmuted into the facts and figures of to-day? When the Unitarian controversy, which had long been smouldering, burst out in 1815 into a lively flame, we had more than 100 churches that were Unitarian in everything but name. In 1820 about 130 had joined themselves for good and ill to the Unitarian movement, not one of which, Dr. Allen tells us, bore individually the Unitarian name or, with one exception, has since assumed it,— an interesting comment on the seriousness with which the Unitarian name is now sometimes discarded. Probably as few churches were called Christian as were called Unitarian. They were called Congregational,— a name expressive of a polity, not of a doctrine, which never should have been allowed to lapse into a doctrinal significance. After the first ranging in opposing camps, the Unitarian gains were slight from year to year, but very regular, exactly as many being added from 1820 to 1840 as from 1840 to 1860, in each period forty-five, giving us 175 in 1840 and 220 in 1860. Since 1860 the number has a little more than doubled, our churches numbering at present 444, of which only 197 are incorporated as Unitarian. I follow Dr. Allen * in these computations, so that you may trust them perfectly, as you might less

* 'The Unitarian Movement since the Reformation.'

safely do if they were mine. The rate of increase also has doubled, or very nearly, during the same period. These figures do not lend themselves heartily to the proposition, stalest of the stale, that the Unitarians are dying out. But they might easily be understood too flatteringly of our numerical strength. Some of the old New England churches that were once filled with a multitude that kept holy-day have now their

"Seas of silence round each separate star."

A general decline in the habit of church-going is partly to blame for this, but still more the exodus from New England to the West, where the young people, whom the New England churches sadly miss, are the life of the new organizations. But here and there also, it must be confessed, there are churches which have suffered from a succession of preachers unequal to their opportunity,— men who have reaped where they sowed not, and gathered where they have not strewn. I do not know of anything more pathetic than the fidelity with which the men, and still more the women, of these churches have strengthened the things that remained that were ready to die. That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten, and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten, and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten; but the few whom the Unitarian principle hath chosen and found worthy of itself have gone on hoping against hope, from each fresh disappointment rallying for a fresh endeavor.

There were those in 1844, Channing their lost leader, who did not care how slow the spread of nominal and avowed Unitarianism might be, if only the Unitarian principles and the Unitarian ideas might have free course and find wide acceptance. Some of these lived to see of the travail of their souls, and to be satisfied with the result; and others died without the sight. Few, I imagine, dared to hope for changes so far-reaching and profound as those which the body of orthodox belief has actually undergone.

> "All can raise the flowers now,
> For all have got the seed."

But not all of it is Unitarian seed. We are too apt to think it is. The leavening process, of which something has been said from time to time, our sweetest consolation for our numerical insignificance, has not been exclusively a Unitarian process. Not all the leaven by a good deal has been Unitarian leaven. It has also been scientific leaven, the leaven of the modern spirit which has often struggled with our Unitarian lumpishness in vain. We have refused to rise. But, Unitarian leaven or what not, the leaven has been there; and the working of it has been something wonderful. Any intelligent orthodox minister or layman is far more liberal in 1894 in his average thinking than the Unitarian minister or layman fifty years ago. In my social contacts with orthodox ministers I tacitly assume that they believe just about the same as I

do, and they do not often disappoint my expectation. There are those who tell us that, if the silent brotherhood had had their way in 1815, the whole body of Congregationalism would have become Unitarian in twenty years. It does not seem too much to be believed. But how could they keep silent any longer? They had kept silent too long. To-day the silent brotherhood, those in orthodox pulpits who are no longer orthodox, is probably ten to one as compared with 1815. How long will they remain standing on one leg? Will there not be soon another challenge which will oblige them to declare themselves, and rank themselves with us or make a party by themselves? It is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Eagerness to have others think our way, swell our ranks, march to our music, is not necessarily something fine and good, and may easily degenerate into something very bad; but to cherish principles, ideas, and beliefs which are for us sources of immeasurable strength and joy and peace, and not be passionately eager to make those who sit in darkness see the light in which we so rejoice, is a moral contradiction than which a grosser is not easily to be conceived. What has our progress or decadence been as measured by these tests? Measured by the money given for missionary work, we make a very creditable exhibit. If men may be presumed to care more for the things they give their money for, then it would seem that Unitarians care a good deal more for their religion now than they did formerly. In 1844 our missionary work was costing us about

$5,000 a year. Now $100,000 does not pay the bills. For twenty years after 1844 there was no appreciable gain in this respect. During those years the aspect of the Unitarian rooms in Boston was more that of a mortuary chapel than that of a missionary workshop of the living God. Then our annual issue of tracts was about 25,000; now that of the American Unitarian Association is 400,000, while the Western Conference, the Women's National Alliance, and other channels speed at least another 100,000 on their cheerful way. But in 1865 we had our great awakening. As the burden of the Sanitary Commission slipped from Dr. Bellows's shoulders, he found them aching for some other of commensurate weight; and he found it in the need of a compacter organization of our Unitarian body and a more active missionary spirit. Time and again since then, when some great thing was to be done, we have rolled up a subscription aggregating more than the sum total of the twenty years before,— ay, more than doubling that sum total once, twice, and thrice. And, if in 1865 we had had the courage of our convictions instead of the timidity of our opinions, what we have done might have been vastly more. We have made many brave discoveries since then, and sought out many excellent inventions,— our national and local conferences, our Ministers' Institute, and, best of all, our Women's National Alliance, even less admirable for its general missionary operations than for its strengthening of our several churches, many a time putting a soul under the ribs of death.

And now the question rises whether with this ap-

parent gain there has been any real loss of that unsectarian spirit which was the grace and glory of the best early Unitarians. There are those who have a fear of this. They tell us, and they tell us truly, that dread of the sectarian spirit was an insuperable bar to Unitarian denominational activity in the earlier course of our development. Men who gave right and left for social charities and public institutions would give nothing for denominational work, because they thought that we had sects enough already. That such views were wholly groundless and irrational only the most foolhardy will deny. The common asseveration, "I am a good Unitarian," often means, "I am as rigid a sectarian as you will find in any of the orthodox sects." But there are better Unitarians, who do not think that we have all the truth there is with us, nor all the goodness, who believe in our ideas, and still more in our principles, and would fain give them freest course, but who are not anxious by what name they shall be called, and whose hope is for an ever-livelier sympathy among all Christian sects and all the great religions of the world. And these, I think, have been in the ascendant in that denominational expansion and that missionary spirit which have been characteristic of our recent times. I do not know of any better differentiation of the sectarian from the true missionary spirit than that of the New Testament words, "Not that we would have dominion over your faith, but that we would be helpers of your joy"; and these words express, I dare believe, the general spirit in which our later Unitarian operations look-

ing to denominational expansion and the spread of our ideas have been carried on.

With the clear gain in missionary zeal, has there been any loss of that social enterprise and public spirit which were not less characteristic of our early Unitarianism than its theological position? It is much easier to ask this question than to answer it. Miserable is that minister among us who cannot justly feel that no worthy social enterprise or movement of enlightened public spirit counts in vain upon the support and furtherance of his people. But to read Channing's 'Life and Letters' is to find ourselves invited to an altitude in these respects much higher than that of the average Unitarian pulpit of our time, and breathing there a more invigorating than our common air. It must of course be remembered that Channing was exceptionally noble in these things, and also that social problems presented themselves with a naïve simplicity fifty years ago which they have gradually lost. That Dr. Bellows was the first president of our New York Civil Service Reform Association, that our own Curtis followed him, and was for twenty years the inspiring soul of the reform,—these are not solitary consolations; and yet we must look well to our laurels if we would not have them shamed by those our fathers wore with easy and unconscious grace. To go back to Channing in these things is to go forward. Young men should leave him alone, they should not open his books nor read the story of his life, if they are contemplating an ecclesiastical ministry, and not one whose church is the world,

and they do not wish to have their placid dream disturbed by the supreme nobility of Channing's vision of a ministry of public spirit and of social help.

In this connection, as well as in another, it may be noted that we have lost here and there something of our Puritan simplicity of worship, and, as a body, we have gained a certain catholic appreciation of what is beautiful and spiritual in the liturgical forms of other bodies. It is certainly a gain that individual or congregational taste and judgment may now be trusted to indulge a ritualistic temper without suspicion of Roman Catholic or even Episcopalian leanings. But the hopes of some and the fears of others that the ritualistic tendency among us is setting in with great force get an instructive comment from the melancholy failure of the new 'Book of Prayer and Praise' to commend itself to more than two or three of all our churches. Evidently, the liturgy that our people want, so far as they want any, is no last and faintest possible attenuation of the traditional thing, but something which has the accent of freshness and reality. We have had some individual aberrations remarkable for their absurdity, as where the remembrance of that tender scene, the tenderest in history, where Jesus on the eve of his departure broke the paschal bread and gave it to his disciples, is advertised as "the celebration of the holy communion," and such or such an one as the "celebrant." But such aping of other people's foolishness is a bane that genders its own antidote, the inevitable disgust which it excites. For those who like this sort of thing there is such a

great abundance of it spread elsewhere that they are not likely to be long content with such meagre crumbs of it as have been smuggled to our board, and they will go to their own place.

Lyman Beecher wrote in 1823 that "all the literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarian, all the trustees and professors of Harvard College were Unitarian, all the élite of wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches." In 1844 these several counts were quite as true as in 1823. Not only so, but in the interval several of our major poets had come of age, and all of them but Whittier (and in the spirit none so much as he) had joined the Unitarian choir. In 1823 Bryant was the only Unitarian poet: in 1844 Longfellow and Emerson and Holmes and Lowell* had already wrapped us in the mantle of their early fame. It is a little thing that each of these men wore our colors on his breast; it is a great and blessed thing that, seeing deep and seeing musically they saw the sovereignty of ethics and the brotherhood of man and the eternal fatherhood of God. Of all these great ones, only Holmes, the most direct and conscious Unitarian of them all, remains. And it is just as well that latterly we have been able to claim no such monopoly of literary excellence as we could formerly. There was danger of our being exalted above measure. Our catalogue of Unitarian poets and historians and orators was getting stale and wearisome. But, if we have lost the old monopoly, it is not because literature has taken sides against us in the deep things of the spirit. It is with us every time. Science has not more grandly

*Since dead, October 7, 1894.

re-enforced our doctrine of the unity of God than literature has re-enforced our doctrine of the dignity of human nature and our doctrines of the free intellect and the superiority of character to creed. As with our monopoly of literature, so with our monopoly of Harvard College. It is a thing past and gone. So much the better. The wider henceforth will be its influence. And, the wider its influence, the wider will be the extent of liberal religion; for culture is an atmosphere in which the traditional dogmas cannot keep alive. Best of all is the transformation of the Divinity School from a Unitarian Theological School into a School of Scientific Criticism and Theology and Comparative Religion; and, so long as the professors are chosen for their real ability, we need not fret ourselves about the cultivation of a non-sectarian appearance by the institution of a happy family of professors of the most various ecclesiastical antecedents. The trouble possibly may be that the Presbyterian professors may not hold fast their Presbyterianism, nor the Baptist professors the constructions peculiar to the Baptist sect, and so on. Look at Professor Toy! Given the scientific method of criticism and theology and comparative religion, and you have a solvent which the traditional dogmas can no more withstand than wood, hay, and stubble the devouring flame.

And how about the third of Lyman Beecher's counts,— all the élite of wealth and fashion crowding Unitarian churches. Thank God, that is no longer true! The Episcopalians have come into our inheritance. It is a good thing, no doubt, that the rich

should have the gospel preached to them. They often need it much. But it has not been a good thing for Unitarianism that it has been attainted as a doctrine only suitable for the rich and cultivated classes of the community. It does make its appeal to sound intelligence, but there is as much sound intelligence among the poor and cultureless as among the rich and cultivated. The proof of this has been the prime justification of our Post-office Mission. It has found plenty of sound intelligence among the humbler folk, and it has not appealed to it in vain. Would it be otherwise with the preacher's living voice? I warrant you it would not. For years we bore complacently the accusation that we had a high and mighty doctrine which only "the élite of wealth and fashion" could appreciate and enjoy. And all the time the trouble was that we were trying to make out that our doctrine was as orthodox as the traditional doctrine, or a little more so, and so had a mongrel type that was "neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor good red herring." Let us preach consistently and clearly the unity of God, the dignity of human nature, the sovereignty of ethics, salvation by character,— that

> "'Tis the deed, and not the creed,
> That helps us in our utmost need,"—

and the common people will hear us no less gladly than they heard the man of Nazareth when he went about preaching such a doctrine many centuries ago. The fault, dear Unitarians, is not in your starry truths, but in yourselves, that you are under-

lings. Go hitch your wagon to their shining team, and fairly let them out, and you shall ride triumphantly and gloriously, and set the heavens of the common heart on fire.

But I must not permit myself to suffer from the imputation that I am speaking of the Unitarian doctrine as if it were the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. There is a very common misconception that it is somehow so, and this misconception has been the occasion of a great deal of Unitarian complacency. The common Unitarian idea is that for the last fifty years, and half as long again, Unitarianism, both in its doctrine and spirit, has been an unchangeable entity to which all the orthodox sects have been gradually approximating; while the truth is that our doctrine and our spirit have been changing all the time and quite as rapidly as the doctrine and the spirit of the other churches round about. Let any one whose memory is good recall the tone of our theology and piety as these expressed themselves in the denominational gatherings of thirty, forty, fifty years ago, and compare it with the tone now characteristic of such gatherings. How much less "Christocentric" it has become, how much more Theocentric, Anthropocentric! How much less formally Christian, how much more frankly human, and so more truly Christian, if the spirit that was in Jesus is to have anything to do with the determination of the meaning of the Christian name! There are various landmarks by which the tidal change might easily be measured. In 1866 we had our "Battle of Syracuse," a discussion of

the present preamble of our National Conference,—the most grave and eloquent discussion that I have ever heard. Look up the record, and see what was then suggested by the progressive party. Francis E. Abbot wrote it; and very recently he has written that the proposition to amend the constitution of the Conference now put forth by a committee appointed by the Conference at its last meeting is substantially the same as his own proposition of 1866. Therein he mightily deceives himself. Those who are most strenuous in their opposition to the new amendment* would accept Abbot's of 1866 "with tumult of acclaim," but it would meet with not a little opposition from the more radical members of the Conference. Here is one sign of many that we have all been on the move. The most conservative to-day would have been radicals among us fifty, forty, even thirty years ago.

Given such principles as those of Truth for Authority, not authority for truth, Reason the only test of Truth, Character, not creed, the end of Life, and Honest thought the best thought wherever it may lead, and you have something harder than the teeth of time. To improve upon such principles is as difficult as to improve upon the axioms of Euclid and the certainties of mathematics. Having such principles, we could only change them for the worse. But

* The amendment here referred to did not prevail at the Saratoga Conference of 1894, but another and much better form, which, though carried without one dissenting voice, is much simpler than Dr. Abbot's proposition of 1866, and every whit as broad. For the phrases of an effete Christology it substitutes the honest statement that the churches of the Conference accept the religion of Jesus as love to God and man, and it heartily welcomes to our fellowship all who, however they may differ from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our work.

we could change for the better our allegiance to these principles, and this we certainly have done. Channing's faith in them we have too often counted to his contemporaries and ourselves for righteousness. For often they were false to them, and we have been no less so. Fifty years gone next winter the Parker controversy was at its utmost height. The gravamen of the charge against him was that he believed the teachings of Jesus not because they were "approved by signs and wonders," but because they appealed to him as true and good. The Boston Association felt itself compromised by his teachings, and wished him to withdraw; but the wish was never formally expressed, and Parker did not accept the tacit invitation. "Couldn't they withdraw?" he said. Our later critics of that time have frequently confounded the Boston Association of Ministers with the American Unitarian Association, which never lifted up its hand against him or his church. It is a very interesting fact that, notwithstanding the friendly attitude of James Freeman Clarke towards Parker, and the consequent rupture of his society in February, 1845, he was made a director of the American Unitarian Association the May following, which was the clearest possible intimation that the Association was not going to sell the Holy Ghost for money. Again and again since then have we had our silly seasons, our moments of cowardice, when, as mirrored by our principles, our practice has shown a halting gait, a miserable shamefacedness. We have forgotten that the slightest creedal test violates the principle of intellectual liberty as

logically as the Westminster Confession. And others have forgotten that practically it makes a mighty difference whether the creed contended for is that of election and reprobation or that of God the Father and Jesus as the image of his loving heart. But, with whatever haltings and stumblings, the realization of our principles in our habital walk and conversation is, I trust, much fuller now than it was fifty years ago.

These are fixed stars, incapable of change; but our beliefs from first to last have altered much, and our present opportunity is, in good part, to show forth unreservedly how much they have altered with the lapse of time and with the advance of critical studies and scientific thought. We could not have a more significant year for our starting-point than the year 1844; for in that year Andrews Norton published his 'Note' on the Old Testament which denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in unqualified terms, and in the same year F. C. Baur published his tremendous impeachment of the Fourth Gospel's authenticity and historic character. Here were the two centres of that ellipse which criticism was to describe during the next fifty years,— the two main positions about which the battle was to rage. The year before, Theodore Parker had published his translation of De Wette's 'Introduction to the Old Testament,' clear in its teaching of the fragmentary character of the Pentateuch and in its assignment of 'Deuteronomy' to 621 B.C., seven centuries later than its traditional date. Dr. Noyes, in 1834, had demonstrated the artificial relation of

the New Testament fulfilments to the Old Testament prophecies, and, in general, the immediateness and yet frequent fallibility of the latter. Few, indeed, are the results of the higher criticism of to-day which are any higher than those to which he afterward attained and frankly taught the young men of the Divinity School. But for his caution in announcing views of which he was not absolutely convinced, he might have anticipated Kuenen's doctrine of the late origin of the Levitical legislation by some twenty years. The acceptance of this doctrine has been the critical event of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It has built again the chronology and inter-relationship of the Old Testament literature, hardly with one stone upon the other as it was before, but with a symmetry and architectural expression that it did not before possess. Many have been the losses incidental to the general reconstruction: Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, the law which it contains, or even the Ten Commandments as they have come down to us; David as the sweet singer of Israel; Solomon as the author of the trilogy, 'Ecclesiastes,' 'Proverbs,' and the 'Song of Songs'; Isaiah as the author of two-thirds of the book that bears his name; and many another prophet's title to the whole or part of that attributed to him. But what are losses such as these to that tremendous gain which is involved in the apprehension of the Old Testament literature and the Old Testament religion as an evolution from the lower to the higher things, from the savagery of Deborah's song to the deep inwardness of the penitential

psalms, from a brutal polytheism and idolatry to that thought of God and that love of man, which were in Jesus' mind and heart!

Within the range of New Testament criticism the balance of our gains and losses is not less satisfactory. Unquestionably there has been some abatement from the rigor of Baur's limitation of Paul's genuine Epistles to 'Romans,' 'Corinthians,' and 'Galatians'; a concession of 'First Thessalonians' and 'Philippians,' with possibly a genuine element involved in 'Colossians' and 'Ephesians.' We have lost all personal associations from the Gospels and from the Apocalypse, long denied to John for no better reason than its refusal to be ascribed to him together with the Fourth Gospel, now for much better reasons. For twenty-five years after Baur's impeachment of the Fourth Gospel in 1844 the tendency was counter to his view; but since then it has been the other way, though not without the opposition of Dr. Ezra Abbot, our most learned textual scholar, while Martineau, never having retreated from the position of Baur, has kept his place, and seen the world come round to him. With these losses of traditional association there has been some loss of the former confidence that Saint Paul was a Unitarian save in the most high and mighty Arian way, and that the New Testament, in general, is an armory of Unitarian texts with few, if any others, intermixed. But here also

> "There are gains for all our losses,
> There are balms for all our pains."

The intense humanity of Paul, as we now apprehend him,—such a good lover, such a good hater!—is a flame that touches his theology with its tongues of fire, and makes it lyrical with a human interest. And, as the higher criticism gives us in the Old Testament a new chronological order, and with that an evolution of ideas, so does the New; but this evolution is, like much besides, a degeneration, the simple humanity of Jesus in the synoptics ever more miserably sophisticated and concealed until in the Fourth Gospel he is but a little short of that divinity, that deity, to which two centuries later he arrived. We have lost one reason after another for varying Jesus from "the kindly race of men," only to find him in the completeness of his unqualified humanity more fascinating to our minds and more attractive to our reverence and affection than he was before.

To-day the Unitarian name takes up into itself a wealth of meaning in which it had at first no part nor lot. Our consciousness of the divine unity is now a hundred times as full and rich as it was fifty years ago. For science is but another name for the discovered unity of the world, and the unity of the world reflects as in a glass the unity of that universal soul which we call God. How grandly does each separate science take its part in that antiphony of responsive unities which at length breaks into chorus in the magnificent generalization of correlated energies, each force the other with its visor down, and all the various manifestations of the one infinite and eternal Power in which we live and move and have our being! Upon the other hand

there was a time when Channing's "one sublime idea," the dignity of human nature, seemed to have met with a supreme rebuff from Darwin's theory of human origins. That doctrine seemed the wreck of our high faith in human nature: it has proved its grandest confirmation. For nothing argues the essential dignity of human nature more than man's partial triumph over the limitations of his brute inheritance; while the long way that he has come suggests as long a way to go, height beyond height, with new horizons ever widening into view.

"All about him shadow still, but while the races flower and fade
Prophet eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on the shade;
Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices blend in choric
Hallelujah to the Maker: 'It is finished! Man is made!'"

I might go on and show that every Unitarian doctrine of the past has suffered — has enjoyed! — a wondrous transformation in these fifty years. What is our present opportunity but to make clear this transformation and to give it ample illustration, wasting no precious minute in the vain endeavor to identify or harmonize the old and new. We cannot read the Bible now, we cannot think upon the life of Jesus as it actually was without "a great trembling of the heart," a swelling joy of gratitude and praise that such a book has been preserved to us with its "great story of a man" worthy of all our admiration, love, and tears. As here, so everywhere; and woe be unto us, and shame upon us, if we do not keep the banner of this gospel so high advanced that it

shall draw to it the eyes of many a battalion fighting against fearful odds, and strike a gladness into the heart of many a dying soldier who by this sign has conquered many an ugly doubt and trampled many a hateful passion down!

Let us not be prouder of our freedom than that we are greatly bound to earnest and intelligent co-operation with every movement looking to a more generous sympathy of the religions and the sects, and with every movement looking to the purification of our politics and the improvement of our social life. The Unitarian society which collectively, or through its individual members, is not making itself felt for the encouragement of every good and helpful thing in the community, is a society which, however it may protest that it must live, deserves the answer made to others that came so protesting, "Pray tell us why." As for religious sympathy I do not know of any more unlimited than that which finds expression in our conferences and churches. It is a profoundly interesting and inspiring fact that a correlative form of the name Unitarian, before it had any theological significance, indicated a Transylvanian league of mutual toleration, which in the sixteenth century included Calvinists, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics; and, apparently, the name, a little later, stuck to the theological Unitarians because they stood by the principle of toleration when all the others fell away. If it was so, I trust we shall not prove unworthy of that great renown. I think we are not so in these last days. Some one has said facetiously that we have a liberal bark and a conser-

vative bite. But it is just the other way. We have a conservative bark,— a very feeble one,— but we have a liberal bite. It proves all things, and holds fast to that which is good. Can you imagine any word of cultivated and intelligent freedom that is not more than welcome in our assemblies? This or that individual may excommunicate us from his fellowship, but he is ever welcome back to ours to say his bravest word. We have the courage of our convictions; but we have not quite, as yet, perhaps, that intellectual and moral clearness which appreciates the necessity of conforming the motto on the flag to the business that we have in hand.*

I have, and I desire to have, no vision of a great Unitarian body sweeping other sects and many millions of believers into its invincible array. No more have I, and no more do I desire to have, the vision of any new organization doing this. I have very serious doubts whether there is to be any new aggregation of the people or the sects corresponding to the enlarging sympathies of religious thought. What we are coming to, I think and hope, is not a mighty aggregation, but a glorious sympathy. There will be separations here and there, and rearrangements of the atoms; and there will be new organizations, with new names, very carefully selected, and very much explained, with serious loss of energy that might be more profitably spent. There will be such happy combinations as the recent Congress of Liberal Religions, leaving every special

* A doubt rebuked by the happy course of things at the Saratoga Conference of 1894.

body its own autonomy, and to every individual his special loyalty as much as ever. And out of all the change and readjustment will come forth, with garments white and glistening, the Free Church of America. But it will, I hope and I believe, be mainly an invisible church. No one church will absorb the others, and no brand-new organization will absorb them all under the banner of an abstract formula from which everything historical and special has been stripped away. There will still be Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Roman Catholics, cherishing their honorable traditions, honoring their great names and high examples, warned and shamed by the mistakes and follies of their past, and enticed by its most perfect inspirations to the highest things; and their dividing lines shall offer as little obstruction to the preacher or the layman going back and forth among them as the equator offers to the cruiser's gliding keel. No vain imagination this, but one that has already been materialized in a thousand places, and soon will be in ten thousand more. In that Free Church of America there will be Unitarians, too, but more of them, I trust, and better. The Unitarian opportunity is not, as I take it, an opportunity to give up our historic name and rename ourselves with some other less concrete, if haply so it may be more attractive to those who, wearying of this or that orthodox enclosure, dread the renaming of themselves by any name short of the most abstract and universal possible. So far, our name has not prevented some of the bravest and the best dissen-

tients from the older churches from casting in their lot with us, and they have been little chafed by the sectarian bond or affronted by the Unitarian tradition; while some who have strayed away in hopes of a more liberal fellowship or isolation have come back to us again. and been right glad to find themselves once more under the old roof and by the old fireside, and with their legs once more under the dear old family mahogany. We greatly overrate the names by which we call ourselves, and the resolutions, preambles, and statements that we make, as influencing those who are, for one reason or another, attracted to our fellowship. Call a particular church almost anything, and let its published creed or statement be any one of the dear five hundred that we have produced from time to time, and, if you have a live man in the pulpit, intelligent and earnest, sympathetic and humane, those that belong to him will gravitate to him, and they will stay with him and help him in his work. As for the general attraction of our body, it is not that of this, that, or the other resolution or preamble or statement. It is what men know of Channing and Parker and Martineau and Clarke and Gannett and Jones and Savage and Potter. It is what they know of our people as they come among us, and find that we are working cheerily for God and man. But it is different with those of us who have been for a long time in the old household of faith, birthright members it may be. "Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name"; and, though in most particulars he was not a pattern of things holy, in this particular he was wise unto

salvation. He recognized the inspiring force of a tradition, as did George Eliot, who put her thought, as he could not, into impressive words, saying: "The eminence, the nobility, of a people depends on its capability of being stirred by memories of striving for what we call spiritual ends,— ends which consist, not in immediate material possession, but in the satisfaction of a great feeling that animates the collective body as with one soul. A people having the seed of worthiness in it must feel an answering thrill when it is adjured by the deaths of its heroes, who died to preserve its national existence; when it is reminded of its small beginnings and gradual growth through past labors and struggles, such as are still demanded of it in order that the freedom and well-being thus inherited may be transmitted unimpaired to children's children; when an appeal against the permission of injustice is made to great precedents in its history, and to the better genius breathing in its institutions. . . . Nations so moved will resist conquest with the very breasts of their women, will pay their millions and their blood to abolish slavery, will share privation in famine and all calamity, will produce poets to sing 'some great story of a man,' and thinkers whose theories will bear the test of action."

There is hardly a word of this that is not just as true of the religious as of the national community. Indeed, it was in a religious community — a nation only in virtue of being such, the Jews — that George Eliot found the finest illustration of her inspiring thought. And, if the Unitarians of the present time

are wise, they will take it well to heart. They will not waste their strength in devising some new name, only to waste as much again in subsequent explanation. "When a God would ride, anything serves him for a chariot"; and let our Unitarianism be something godlike, let it be even manly, and the name will carry anything of grace or glory that we can impose. Names have their rights as well as breathing men; and the Unitarian name, with its great historical and personal associations, carrying along with it, as the sun its planetary stars, the names of Priestley and Lindsey and Channing and Dewey and Martineau and Parker and Bartol and Hedge and Bellows and Clarke and Emerson and Furness and Gannett — no matter which — and Sumner and Curtis, and a host besides, too great for numbering, is a name to conjure with, to bring bright spirits from the vasty deep of thought and moral will, to bring dark spirits out of hiding to receive their doom. What if the name has been used once, twice, or thrice to marshal men some meaner way? All the more reason that for raising it aloft, and honoring it with higher purpose and with fresh resolve. If in the thick of battle men should drag the standard in the mire with weak or coward hands, would that be a signal for the men who know what victories it has inspired to let it go, meaning to have a nice new one which will be all innocent of smoke and rent, and to which no forlorn hope has ever lifted up the eyes of passionate desire? Would it not rather be a signal for them to make themselves a wall about it, and to raise it up, "not a stripe

erased, not a star obscured," the crying need their call of God to deeds of high emprise? Let every man be fully persuaded concerning these things in his own mind.

As for the original meaning of the word "Unitarian," were we entirely sure of that, it ought not to have a feather's weight in determining the present use of it. In what unfathomable abysses of absurdity should we be landed every day if we attempted to fasten upon others or ourselves the original meanings of the words which we habitually use! Then every pin would be a feather, and every style a graving tool. Then all our pecuniary transactions would be in flocks and herds; and every sycophant would be an informer against persons stealing figs. Unquestionably, what it denoted in the early American history of our denomination was the doctrine of God's oneness as opposed to the doctrine of his trinity. That meaning, also, was a good meaning, and one of which we need not be ashamed, especially as it is a meaning that has gathered to itself immeasurable addition, scope, and illustration with the advance of time. Originally, the doctrine was a doctrine of God as the Divine Unit: now it is a doctrine of the Divine Unity; and, as such, it takes up into itself the whole gist of modern science, the correlation of forces, the transmutation of species, the evolution and affinities of language, institutions, art, the sympathy of religions. If there is a word in the whole scope of moral and religious usage that has been enlarged and glorified by the process of the suns, it is the word "Unitarian"; and for every

reason there was for assuming it a century ago there are a hundred reasons now for retaining it and wearing it like a decoration on our breasts,—a sign of that nobility which compels us to be good and true. Emerson said that there should be a statement of religion that should make atheism impossible. Such a statement is the doctrine of the Divine Unity as science teaches it. The name which stands for such a statement is as good a name as can be fashioned by the human voice. Are we good enough for it? That is the deeper question which we have to meet.

But that which the name "Unitarian" denotes is nothing in comparison with what it connotes. It connotes the principles and ideas that have been associated with it; a movement of thought in sympathy with science; a movement of ethics in sympathy with reform; the subjection of all opinions and beliefs to reason as the sole authority; "the supremacy of ethics," deed, and not creed, the one important thing; that dignity of human nature which Channing called his one sublime idea, and which the march of science has confirmed as grandly as it has confirmed the unity of God. A name that has connoted all these things, and, with all these, innumerable heroisms, sacrifices, and devotions of the men and women who have called themselves Unitarians, is not a name to be lightly, or even carefully, set aside for any other in the vocabulary of spiritual ideas. 'Tis mightiest for the mightiest. 'Twould become a sceptred monarch better than his crown. 'Tis a name which those will cherish most affectionately and least willingly resign who have

entered deepest into all that it suggests of generous thought and noble consecration. The man or church that is entirely true to its best meaning is as free as only those can be who recognize themselves as greatly bound to service of all righteousness and truth and love.

"Nurse of the future, daughter of the past,
That stern phylactery best becomes thee now:
Lift to the morning star thy fearless brow!
Cast thy brave truth on every warring blast!
Stretch thy white hand to the forbidden bough,
And let thine earliest symbol be thy last."

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